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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME X WINTER 1958 NUMBER 1

THE LITERARY STATUS OF THE ENGLISH POPULAR BALLAD

ARTHUR K. MOORE

SCHOLARS have generally been inclined to view the English popular ballad not as an aesthetic object but as a relic of an early and primitive state of society, in which the literary process was governed more by instinct than by convention. They have implicitly denied the existence of a purely literary problem, and their speculations about the ballad matrix have had the effect of discouraging criticism of any but an appreciative sort. Yet excellencies appropriate to learned literature have been incidentally claimed for the ballad, and, in contrast to other forms of popular art (e.g., lyrical folk song, folk tale, broadside), it has received extensive notice in anthologies and literary histories. This is not to argue that it deserves less but only to remark the impropriety of assuming value for what, beyond an occasional explication, has escaped close critical scrutiny.

The ballad doubtless owes its relative immunity from value judgments to the naturalistic explanation of its origin. Most of the older scholars probably felt that standards derived from literature of the main cultural stream were largely inapplicable to songs which, in the best opinion, came ultimately from the illiterate throng. For some time now, the theory of communal composition has been in the discard, but discussions of the ballad continue to be colored by romantic attitudes toward the ill-defined folk and their creative activity. In important respects the ballad has not been wrenched free of the context in which the eighteenth century placed it by reason of an unconscionably narrow view of literary form. It is my opinion that literature even of the humblest order is completely accessible to criticism and that, accordingly, the ballad, whatever its degree of sophistication, is susceptible to systematic analysis. With the object of clarifying the literary status of

the English ballad, I propose to test the obstacles to critical study which by general agreement have been set around it and to consider the achievement of some of those specimens which seem to have very significantly shaped scholarly thinking.

I

The word *ballad* derives from OF *balade*, which in Chaucer's usage as in the French denoted a courtly lyric of fixed form. During the fifteenth century the term was loosely employed and afterward applied somewhat indiscriminately, though perhaps more often than not to more or less popular narrative songs.[1] There is no very ancient authority for the specialized sense standardized by F. J. Child, nor is there any evidence that the Child ballad was ever regarded outside of scholarly circles as *sui generis*.[2] The contents of his monumental *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98)—305 ballads with variants—remained after a long and uncertain sifting process, some notion of which can be gained from an examination of his earlier collections.[3] He did not live to write an introduction, and the criteria by which the corpus was assembled can only be conjectured. Scholars in this century have commonly agreed (often without independent investigation) that the term "popular ballad," covering Child's exemplars and a few subsequently reported, properly designates a distinct genre.[4] It can hardly be maintained, however, that a ballad genre has been validated, for nowhere are the principles set forth by which these pieces are ordered and contrived and thereby discriminated from other popular narrative songs.[5] In short, this reputed genre yet lacks a serviceably exclusive definition and an unambiguous description of its peculiar art.

The impression is sometimes created that Child might have been able to resolve some of the doubts about the ballad, but what he wrote after

[1] Louise Pound, *Poetic Origins and the Ballad* (New York, 1921), pp. 39-46; G. H. Gerould, *The Ballad of Tradition* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 235-238; E. K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 137-139.

[2] William Shenstone in two letters to Percy in 1761 seems first to have insisted on limiting the term "ballad" to narrative songs. Quoted by S. B. Hustvedt, *Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain during the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1916), pp. 160 f.

[3] According to the calculations of Thelma G. James, "The English and Scottish Popular Ballads of Francis J. Child," *JAFL*, XLVI (1933), 51-53, the third and definitive edition of 1882-98 rejects 115 pieces from the first, published under the title *English and Scottish Ballads* (Boston, 1857), and adds 90 pieces, of which 37 were not previously available.

[4] See Gerould, pp. 84-86.

[5] In the loosest sense of the term, subsuming many specimens besides Child's, the ballad may possibly be considered a genre; but it has not been shown to constitute a genre in the sense of the classical epic, the Italian sonnet, and other forms controlled more or less by formula. James, pp. 57-59, raised the legitimate doubt that a definition could be devised to comprehend all the Child pieces.

a good many years of reflection encourages no such view. His article under "Ballad Poetry"[6] in the *Universal Cyclopaedia* (1900) is with respect to the major issues more intuitional than evidential, and it is wavering besides.[7] His discussion is affected by romantic notions of ancient literature, and the ballad never emerges from the mediaeval shadowland as conceived by the nineteenth century. For him it appears to have been essentially a relic, beautiful but without literary pretensions:

> The *popular* ballad, for which our language has no unequivocal name, is a distinct and very important species of poetry. Its historical and natural place is anterior to the appearance of the poetry of art, to which it has formed a step, and by which it has been regularly displaced, and, in some cases, all but extinguished. Whenever a people in the course of its development reaches a certain intellectual and moral stage, it will feel an impulse to express itself, and the form of expression to which it is first impelled is, as is well known, not prose, but verse, and in fact narrative verse.

Child postulated as the matrix of the ballad a homogeneous community in which "the whole people form an individual." Since the "author counts for nothing" under these conjectured circumstances, the ballad is necessarily distinguished by the "absence of subjectivity and of self-consciousness." Yet he was unwilling to abandon the ballad to a community of illiterates—"the lower orders of a people"—and out of his sense of the fitness of things he contrived an agreeable cultural situation which, unfortunately for his argument, has no demonstrable historical reality:

> Nothing, in fact, is more obvious than that many of the ballads of the now most refined nations had their origin in that class whose acts and fortunes they depict—the upper class—though the growth of civilization has driven them from the memory of the highly polished and instructed, and has left them as an exclusive possession to the uneducated. The genuine popular ballad had its rise in a time when the distinctions since brought about by education and other circumstances had practically no existence.

Child's indecisive statement is highly significant; it expresses a measure of allegiance to the old theory of communal composition, which F. B. Gummere was later to elaborate with special reference to the ballad,[8] and at the same time a doubt that ballads could have originated

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[6] Published originally in *Johnson's Cyclopaedia* (1874).

[7] For an attempt to clarify Child's position, see W. M. Hart, "Professor Child and the Ballad," *PMLA*, XXI (1906), 755-807.

[8] Gummere's exposition of the theory is spread through "The Ballad and Communal Poetry," *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, V (1896), 41-56; *Old English Ballads* (Boston, 1904); *The Popular Ballad* (Boston and New York, 1907); *The Beginnings of Poetry* (New York, 1908). The theory had been largely discredited before Gummere picked it up from German sources, which, in the opinion of Phillips Barry ("Das Volk dichtet nichts," *Bul. of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast*, No. 7, 1934, p. 4), he wrenched in order to support his argument.

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in a throng of dancing and singing illiterates. He apparently recognized the danger of an upper-class origin to the concept of the ballad as an artless form and almost in the same breath reaffirmed the classless, homogeneous setting. Child's work was in a sense completed by Kittredge, who wrote the introduction to the Cambridge abridgment of the *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1904). Kittredge apparently felt nothing of his master's misgivings but spoke strongly for the communal principle, though, to be sure, not for group authorship of extant specimens.

The rise and fall of this theory is not of principal concern here; suffice it to say that Louise Pound among others exposed its absurdities,[9] in the end forcing it out of serious consideration—but, oddly enough, not freeing scholarship of its influence. The important questions were reargued by Gerould, who said all that could be said in defense of Gummere's views against Pound's attack. While finding much to blame in the anticommunalists, he nonetheless executed a perceptible retreat from the more extreme positions maintained by the communalists. His concessions appear, however, to jeopardize the traditional concept of the ballad without much clarifying its origin and status.

Acceptance of the principle of single authorship has meant something less than a complete turnabout. The folk, collectively considered, is a more important factor than the original author, if, as it is widely believed, all of the ballads have been significantly altered in oral tradition by a supposedly beneficial process called communal re-creation.[10] By this view, every ballad is multiple and mutable, consisting of an unascertainable number of versions, all of which may be undergoing change. It is thus futile to speak of an author and impossible to establish a text. Even judgments about individual versions are not entirely feasible, since the ballad is not simply text but a joint product of words, music, and singer which varies with each performance. In this vein Evelyn Kendrick Wells has recently observed:

> It is the product of no one time or person; its author, if ever known, has been lost in the obscurity of the past and in the processes of oral tradition. Its medium is word of mouth rather than print. It goes its way independent of literary influences, carrying for a while the accretions of this or that day and singer, but sloughing them off as it passes to the next. It has no one original text, being freshly created by each successive singer as he makes his own version.[11]

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[9] A. K. Davis, ed., *Traditional Ballads of Virginia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929) pp. 4-9, provides a summary account of the controversy.

[10] Fully stated by Barry, "Communal Re-Creation," *BFSSNE*, No. 5 (1933), pp. 4-6, and approved by Gerould, pp. 168 f., who, however, used an earlier article by Barry, "An American Homiletic Ballad," *MLN*, XXVIII, 1913), 4 f. On the question of the handling of the ballads by the folk, see the very full discussion of Sergio Baldi, *Studi sulla poesia popolare d'Inghilterra e di Scozia* (Rome, 1949), pp. 42-65.

[11] *The Ballad Tree* (New York, 1950), p. 5.

Behind this modified communalism probably lies Gerould's remarkable statement of the ballad's mode of existence, which tends to invalidate the title of the original author to his work:

> The popular ballad . . . has no real existence save when held in memory and sung by those who have learned it from the lips of others. In saying this I am not ignoring the difficult question of its origin . . . but merely emphasizing the primary condition of its being. Strictly speaking, the ballad as it exists is not a ballad save when it is in oral circulation, and certainly not until it has been in oral circulation.[12]

Gerould intended, of course, to support the claims of the folk, but the dense metaphysical integument which he fashioned for that purpose would, if accepted, effectively insulate the ballad against all literary inquiry and indeed against all efforts at understanding. If it cannot be essentially represented in print, it can hardly be apprehended for critical examination. Gerould probably did not mean quite so much, for on occasion he dealt with the ballad as if it belonged to the province of literature and could be discriminated accordingly. He was nonetheless inclined to deny the applicability of any standard save what might be called "balladness," signifying a norm presumed to be implicit in the irrefutable instances.[13]

The confused status of the ballad today can be explained by reference to the cultural and literary biases of the period which officially discovered it. Percy was in most things a man of his century, with a characteristic tenderness for the past and for the peasant, but also with a view of literature founded in neoclassical theory and practice. A century which revised Shakespeare and rejected Donne could hardly be expected to regard inartificial song seriously as literature, and Percy carefully refrained from making any such claim; yet the primitivism and antiquarianism of the times permitted unbounded enthusiasm for whatever related to ancient men living close to nature. His dedicatory epistle to the Countess of Northumberland presents the ballads "not as labours of art, but as effusions of nature, showing the first efforts of ancient genius";[14] and his Preface, while invoking the taste of ballad lovers like Addison,[15] avoids their critical indiscretions:

> In a polished age, like the present, I am sensible that many of these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them. Yet have they, for the most part, a pleasing simplicity, and many artless graces, which in the opinion of no mean critics have been thought to compensate for the want of higher

[12] *Op. cit.*, pp. 2 f.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[14] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. H. B. Wheatley (London, 1887), I, 1.

[15] For praising *Chevy Chase* (*Spectator*, Nos. 70, 74) Addison endured considerable ridicule.

beauties, and, if they do not dazzle the imagination, are frequently found to interest the heart.[16]

Later scholars much abused Percy for taking editorial liberties, but none denied that the ballads considered as literature left a great deal to be desired. If less apologetic than Percy, Child actually claimed no more, nor did Kittredge. The latter concluded his Introduction to the Cambridge edition with an infelicitous discussion which evidences a firm intent to claim value for the ballads without stating precisely wherein value resides:

> Of the merit of the English and Scottish ballads nothing need be said. It is unhesitatingly admitted by all persons who care for ballads at all. There is no occasion to make comparisons as to excellence between these pieces and the poetry of art. Such comparisons are misleading; they tend only to confound the distinctions between two very different categories of literature. The ballads must stand or fall by themselves, not by reason of their likeness or unlikeness to Dante or Shakspere or Milton or Browning. Above all things, they should not be judged indiscriminately or in the lump... Finally, the popular ballad, though it may be despised, cannot be ignored by the student of literature. Whatever may be thought of the importance of such verse in its bearing on the origin of poetry in general ... the ballad, like other forms of popular material, has in the last two centuries exercised a powerful influence on artistic literature, and it will always have to be reckoned with by the literary historian.[17]

This melancholy argument confesses the lack of a sufficient rationale, an original defect of ballad scholarship which to this day has not been repaired.

The followers of Child and Kittredge have not considered the possibility of dissolving Percy's distinction between art poetry and natural poetry, which the critical inflexibility of the eighteenth century dictated,[18] but rather have felt a need to reaffirm it as an integral part of the ballad concept. To allow art to the ballad is to invite troublesome questions about its origin and form, though to deny art is not quite reasonable. Gerould argued that the difference was a matter of consciousness of aesthetic principles. While not denying the existence of principles somewhere in the background of the ballads, he yet minimized to the vanishing point their influence on the composers. His defense of Percy's dichotomy, it must be said, entails an explanation of the creative process in the folk milieu which is highly intuitional, if not mystical.[19] Leach accepted Gerould's distinction and then pressed on to the logical but nonetheless absurd conclusion that the ballads were products of dabbling by the collective illiteracy:

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[16] *Op. cit.*, I, 8.

[17] *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. H. C. Sargent and G. L. Kittredge (Boston, 1904), pp. xxx f.

[18] See René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950* (New Haven, 1955), I, 126 ff.; M. J. C. Hodgart, *The Ballads* (London, 1950), pp. 159-161.

[19] Gerould, pp. 13 f.

> The musician and storyteller on the conscious level intellectualizes his material and method by trying them against aesthetic principles already codified and drawn up for him. The folk, on the other hand, accept, reject, modify, augment their songs and stories through unconscious subjective processes; and what one generation accepts, another may change or reject entirely. So we hit on beauty, or pathos, or sense of tragedy not exactly by chance but nearly so.[20]

In the end Leach states, as he must, that the makers of folk song are without art.[21]

Whatever the full explanation of the creative process, there is no reason for thinking it differs fundamentally according to time, place, or social circumstance. It is not evident that learned poets have ever followed rule books slavishly or that unlearned ones have worked without conscious regard for convention. A good deal has been staked on artlessness, which has yet to be plausibly explained. Indeed, the question arises whether this crucial concept is very clear to those who insist upon its validity. For instance, a comment by Wells on a passage of dialogue in *Young Hunting* is something less than coherent: "It is the simplicity of great art, as well as of great artlessness."[22] It is perhaps just as well for the traditional view that artlessness, implying at most an unconscious critical sense in the folk, cannot be substantiated; for the absence of definite critical controls is incompatible with a ballad genre.

The old idea of natural poetry, which psychologically considered has little to recommend it, is rendered even less tenable in the case of the ballad by a concession made by Gerould and affirmed with damaging elaborations by Leach. They agree, against the opinion of Kittredge and others, that ballads may have been composed on social levels somewhat above the illiterate commonalty and even by minstrels. Percy, it may be recalled, ascribed the ballads to the "ancient English bards and minstrels,"[23] though without much supporting evidence. Kittredge argued that minstrels could not have composed them because their repertoires, as far as known, consisted of very different matter.[24] Gerould rather cautiously granted that the makers of ballads may sometimes have been "middle-class folk," even professional minstrels of a rude and illiterate order.[25] Leach expressed the same view, though apparently without Gerould's concern about its implications:

> Who are the ballad folk? There is a general impression that they are illiterate hillbillies, wandering around barefoot and smoking corncob pipes. The evidence from numerous records as far back as the Middle Ages points rather to the middle class: small farmers, shoemakers, village schoolteachers, nursemaids, tinkers, wives of small tradesmen, innkeepers, drovers. Among these too are the itinerant

[20] MacEdward Leach, ed., *The Ballad Book* (New York, 1955), p. 10.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[22] Wells, p. 91.
[23] Percy, I, 7.
[24] Sargent and Kittredge, p. xxiii.
[25] Gerould, pp. 185, 225 f.

singers of songs who go from village to village plying a small trade but concerning themselves largely with singing their stores of songs.[26]

Some of these categories must be reckoned lower class; but, if Leach means what he says, he has fathered the ballads upon a class which produced the bulk of mediaeval literature, including the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Canterbury Tales*, and which from the fourteenth century on was increasingly literate. Not even on the lower side could the middle class be described as artless. Indeed, it may be doubted that any section of mediaeval society was innocent of artificial literature, since knowledge of it depended simply on auditory receptiveness,[27] not literacy. The middle class may have composed ballads, but neither in the Middle Ages nor in the Renaissance was it demonstrably free of the literary taint which has been thought ruinous to balladry. If actually middle class in origin, the ballad can hardly be regarded as a special case, implying an unusual cultural situation and mode of composition.

The inordinate concern from Percy to the present with the ballad matrix has been largely owing to the simple conviction that the ballad, while often pleasing, differs in fundamental ways from the verse of more or less learned poets and cannot stand comparison with it. Encumbered by this preconception, scholars have supposed that the ballad could be legitimately prized only as a product of a cultural situation separate and apart from the main stream. This is not to say, of course, that they have had to make excuses to themselves for taking unqualified pleasure in favorite pieces. But it is quite another matter to claim absolute excellence for poetry which appears to fall far below the norms established by major writers. By means of rather shaky inferences a home was found for the ballad in the vast wastes of the Middle Ages, though not in a location that scholarship might visit. The search for origins is not in itself reprehensible, but it has been carried out with something less than scientific objectivity and to the neglect of the ballad as art. The cause was sought before the effect was rightly understood; and perhaps necessarily the supposed matrix, besides lacking historical probability, precluded the possibility of conscious artistry and thus of high achievement. It is not a reproach to Percy that he made no attempt to demonstrate the aesthetic integrity of the ballads; but literary scholars in this century, which in criticism is flexible if anything, cannot pretend to be hampered by neoclassical standards. Criticism was never freer or better equipped than now to determine whether the ballads individually and collectively have value *as* literature as well as *for* literature.

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[26] Leach, pp. 8 f.

[27] Ruth Crosby, "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, XI (1936), 100.

II

Most things relating to the ballad have been violently disputed, but there has been unusual agreement about those specimens especially worthy of inclusion in the golden treasuries of literature. That this should be the case is rather surprising, since literary standards have not been thought applicable to the ballad.[28] It is of course possible that the preference of anthologists has been altogether determined by non-aesthetic criteria. This supposition fails, however, to account for the narrow range of their choices among scores of ballads which demand equal consideration by virtue of metrical arrangement, subject matter, use of authentic conventions, impersonality, and freedom from elegance. The conclusion is hard to resist that in some way literary quality rather than typicalness has recommended them. This inconsistency would perhaps be of little significance except for the likelihood that the influence of the preferred pieces on scholarly thinking has been far out of proportion to their number. In that event, they would invite close study for their central importance to the very concept of the ballad as well as for their probable literary excellence.

It is evident from the anthologies of English literature intended for undergraduate use that scholars have a marked preference for eight of Child's 305 ballads, and in the same versions.[29] *Sir Patrick Spens* (A) seems never to be omitted and *Edward* (B) almost never. *Barbara Allan* (A) and the *Wife of Usher's Well* (A) appear four times in five. The incidence of the *Twa Corbies, Lord Randal* (A), *Johnie Armstrong* (A), and the *Daemon Lover* (A) is about fifty per cent. Others selected with significant frequency—about once in three times—are the *Three Ravens, Mary Hamilton* (A), *Young Waters, Lord Thomas and Fair Annet* (A), *Thomas Rymer* (A), *Kemp Owyne* (A), and the *Twa Sisters* (A). The interest in the last three pieces of this group is perhaps chiefly folkloristic. The *Hunting of the Cheviot (Chevy Chase)* and the *Maid Freed from the Gallows* figure importantly in ballad scholarship but for one reason or another do not often appear in anthologies.

While the validity of any useful grouping is likely to be vitiated by marginal instances, the claim can be made with considerable justice that the more famous of these pieces stand somewhat apart in point of internal form. Since none is rich in narrative detail and most are positively deficient, the definition of the ballad as a folk song that tells a

[28] Gerould, p. 85, insisted that "we must ... look with unprejudiced eyes at everything that has the warrant of tradition behind it, whether or not it seems to us 'good' according to any theory of origins or our sophisticated standards of aesthetic taste."

[29] I have based my estimates on thirteen well-known textbooks (e.g., Woods-Watt-Anderson, *The Literature of England*) which are now in print or have been until recently.

story is for this group assuredly inadequate, if not misleading. Telling a story is not the only concern and probably not even the major one. The claim of the ballad to literary merit thus depends to a large extent on pieces which are not, with minor exceptions, pre-eminently narrative. Rather interestingly, in view of the standard definition, no one has argued that they would be the better for telling completer stories; it is perhaps evident that, whatever the method, they do their work well.

Yet the relative sketchiness of the anthology ballads is the source of a difficulty which, though perhaps more apparent than real, requires attention. Inasmuch as time and transmission work substantial and, by the common view, usually unfortunate alterations in the ballad,[30] there is some antecedent probability that even the earliest recorded versions, which anthologists almost always prefer, differ markedly from their originals. It stands to reason that a ballad caught up after a century or two of oral transmission will register a loss of detail, if of nothing more serious, and in any case will have suffered as art. Accordingly, the ballads in question here may represent varying degrees of deterioration from originals which, if available, would provoke contempt for their derivatives. Although there is not much concrete evidence to oppose this view, it rests ultimately on the unwarranted assumption that most extant ballads traveled far—some even from the Middle Ages—before lodging in print. But, however ancient their story content, the ballads themselves are not, except in a small handful of instances, demonstrably mediaeval, and very few antedate the seventeenth century.[31] Most of the favored anthology pieces cannot be dated earlier than the eighteenth century, and none recalls extant mediaeval song in style. Indeed, the authentic mediaeval specimens, which might be expected to show balladry at its best, are as a group neither rich in detail nor remarkable as literature. While the most admired ballads as now known probably differ from their originals, it would be absurd to postulate for them a long and generally deleterious oral career prior to the earliest recordings. In any event, the literary value of a ballad is properly measured only by its aesthetic achievement; how it reached its available state or states, though important for cultural history, is ultimately of no concern to criticism. Close analysis tends to show that in the main the anthology versions require no literary allowances to be made for them and thus provide no basis for assuming superior, or even longer, originals.

It is possible to describe the method of the popular ballads as narrative, dramatic, or even lyrical, but none of these terms or any combina-

[30] See J. R. Moore, "The Influence of Transmission on the English Ballads," *MLR*, XI (1916), 408.

[31] Pound, "On the Dating of the English and Scottish Ballads," *PMLA*, XLVII (1932), 15, argues persuasively that the great period of ballad making was after the Renaissance.

tion of them (e.g., dramatic narrative, lyrical-dramatic narrative)[32] is of much use to criticism. Some years ago M. J. C. Hodgart proposed to supply the lack of a serviceable term with "montage."[33] Whether generally applicable to the ballads or not, the term permits a valuable insight into the method of the ones at issue here. At the center of most of these pieces is a commonplace (and usually tragic) predicament set around by scenes sufficient to define it and at the same time to outline, often very vaguely, a story of considerable magnitude. The matter, shaped up from various angles of representation, tends to point away from the particular situation and toward a general meaning, and it is upon the higher level that these ballads have their greatest interest. They are most significantly symbolic structures; and to speak of them as narrative, dramatic, or lyrical is to call to mind poetry of different management. W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., has written, "But the best story poems may be analyzed, I believe, as metaphors without expressed tenors, as symbols which speak for themselves."[34] His example—*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*—is incontrovertible, though its aesthetic appears to differ from that of the symbolistic popular ballads. Wimsatt does not state the criteria by which the best story poems are to be sorted out, but he would probably agree that little is to be gained by analyzing as symbolic structures those fairly long and detailed ballads in which the story seems to be everything or nearly so. Child's collection assuredly abounds in innocent narratives (e.g., *Young Beichan*) and dramatic exchanges (e.g., *Riddles Wisely Expounded*), and possibly only a minority actually demand metaphoric extension. This is not to imply, however, that only the popular anthology pieces are eligible for such treatment or that others are any the less the products of conscious and individual artistry.

The most famous version of *Sir Patrick Spens*, though decidedly fragmentary as narrative, leaves a distinct impression of achieved art. The literary result considered, it can hardly be thought accidental that the spectacular circumstances surrounding the foundering of the ship are neglected and that acts and scenes of an unessential order are held up to view. The very poverty of local detail sets a limit on narrative interest, while the obviously symbolic import of much of the content points the whole experience ineluctably toward an abstract level of meaning. Indeed, *Sir Patrick Spens* insists so powerfully on being something more than a story of death at sea that its otherness densely overspreads the simple relation. At the center of the ballad is an ironic situation—the king sitting "in Dumferling toune" appears to honor Sir Patrick by choosing him to undertake an important voyage which,

[32] Leach, p. 5; W. J. Entwistle, *European Balladry* (Oxford, 1939), p. 18.
[33] Hodgart, p. 27, acknowledges his debt to S. Eisenstein's *The Film Sense* (1943), in which parts of *Paradise Lost* are studied as montage.
[34] *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington, Ky., 1954), p. 80.

on account of the season, is unlikely to turn out well. The poet exploits the mixed feelings with which the sailor quite naturally reads his orders from the king:

> The first line that Sir Patrick red,
> A loud lauch lauched he;
> The next line that Sir Patrick red,
> The teir blinded his ee.

Spens must needs laugh and weep at a command which is, the conditions for sailing considered, utterly absurd and yet full of dark fatality for him. An ominous weather forecast spoken by a crewman supports his pessimistic appraisal of the situation and removes all doubt about the result:

> 'Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
> Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
> And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
> That we will cum to harme.'

With his poem largely secured by this exciting symbol, the poet might have been expected to proceed in a conventional way to the tragic conclusion, but he elected to risk a novel tactic. What follows is then, not a step-by-step narration culminating in the sinking of the ship, but a series of scenes which ironically announce the outcome and cast shadow after shadow across the experience:

> O our Scots nobles were richt laith
> To weet their cork-heild schoone;
> Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
> Thair hats they swam aboone.
>
> O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
> Wi thair fans into their hand,
> Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
> Cum sailing to the land.
>
> O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
> Wi thair gold kems in thair hair,
> Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
> For they'll se thame na mair.
>
> Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
> It's fiftie fadom deip,
> And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
> Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

The effect of the poet's shift is to lower the pitch and to generalize the tragedy; the particular disaster, which is of a sort most poignantly meaningful to seafaring peoples, tends to merge with the multitude of other fatal misadventures dogging the footsteps of mankind. The scenes contemplated by the poet, besides fleshing out the narrative slightly, reveal human beings taking pathetic and somewhat irrelevant postures

in the face of circumstances beyond their power to control. The Scottish nobles are said to be concerned with emblems of rank and wealth—their cork-heeled shoes—when life itself is in jeopardy. The wives, waiting helplessly on shore with fans and gold combs in their hands, re-create and suffer the last agonies of their men. And "guid" Sir Patrick, arranged at the bottom of the sea with the Scottish lords at his feet, receives such honor as position confers but an honor which no man would rush to claim. Several questions about the tragedy remain unanswered but make no demand for answers, since larger considerations overshadow the particular event. By using an ironical angle of vision, and avoiding detail closely related to the calamitous moment, the poet blocks off the pathetic level of experiencing the tragedy and compels his audience to brood over the fatal forces which in one form or another overtake all men.

The achievement of *Sir Patrick Spens* is approached, though hardly equalled, by some other ballads which use much the same formula. In *Young Waters* the observations are relevant and moving but not overwhelmingly portentous; their focus is rather the particular tragic instance than the moral design of a world in which a young man can be executed for no other offense than his own handsomeness. It is significant of little more than personal distress for the victim to remark.

> 'Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
> In the wind bot and the weit;
> Bot I neir rade thro Stirling town
> Wi fetters at my feet.'

Such a statement, obvious and even trivial, is of course two-layered; but it makes no large demands and folds quietly into the story. *Mary Hamilton* tends in the opposite direction despite a series of sentimental gestures toward the close. In its best part the ballad has as much tension as *Sir Patrick Spens* and as much symbolic force. There are few passages in Child's collection more powerful than Mary's reply to the "auld queen," who has accused her of murdering the infant got on her by the "hichest Stewart of a' ":

> 'I winna put on my robes o black,
> Nor yet my robes o brown;
> But I'll put on my robes o white,
> To shine through Edinbro town.'

Although weakened by the concluding matter—Mary's drinking healths to her "weil-wishers" and her unexceptional reflections on her parents—the ballad refuses to be taken at either the literal or the moral level and constantly intimates the hopeless struggle of a valiant spirit against a universe of evil consequences.

The fragmentary *Wife of Usher's Well* bears certain formal re-

semblances to the ballads previously discussed, but it is less obviously manipulated than any of them. Whereas the scenes sifted out by the author of *Sir Patrick Spens* betray very artful discrimination and ironic twisting, those of the *Wife of Usher's Well* have a central importance and, moreover, seem to speak pretty much for themselves. Since the tragic situation is basically ironical, the poet has only to report the circumstances in order to create a powerful impression. It is noteworthy, however, that his extreme detachment tends to call attention to the cruel universe which surrounds the hapless wife. Word comes to the woman of the death of her sons, presumably by drowning, and in her distress she pronounces a terrible curse:

'I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood.'

The curse appears to effectuate the return of the sons, but the audience learns a grim fact unknown to the mother, that the birch of which their hats were made grew "at the gates o Paradise." The Prodigal Son was not more cordially entertained than the unsubstantial sons of the deluded wife:

'Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well.'

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide,
And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

Cock's crow brings the inevitable revelation; as usual in such cases the revenants must return to the grave or abide a "sair pain." The distress of the mother is not reported and need not be. The ballad finally speaks most significantly not of a woman whose cursing earned a terrible punishment but of the vanity of human wishes. Its success is owing to an attitude so remote and restrained as to create a positive deficit of compassion and accordingly a very naked symbolization of the human predicament. The achievement of the *Wife of Usher's Well* can be measured by the *Daemon Lover*, which, though involving a revenant and an even more sensational action, is nothing more than a sentimentalized ghost story.

Laying stress on strategy, as I have done, supposes conscious authorship and thus affronts the notion that the ballads evolved without expert guidance. If every ballad, as in the standard view, registers the impress of several hands, the question of the author's attitude is very nearly an impertinence. Understandably, older scholars often felt im-

pelled to doubt the authenticity of specimens strongly intimating a sophisticated point of view, though admitting the most attractive of these to the canon on the assumption that they were originally honest folk songs. Apparently from principle, the importance of the ballad speaker has been implicitly denied, and his varying angles of representation have been lumped without much discrimination under objectivity. While the ballads are of course objective, they are not for that naive reportage; indeed, the anthology pieces are patently artificial structures, evidencing conscious shaping from definable angles. The simple-seeming *Wife of Usher's Well* is no less a work of conscious art than *Sir Patrick Spens*, which has been suspected of learned handling. Although *Barbara Allan* has not been questioned on this count, it is instinct with compassion and selective of detail to the point of serious incompleteness. What may have originated as a grim account of malefic image making or similar witchery[35] has been culled for tender moments, and these have been organized to obtain a sentimental response. Although telling a poor story, this ballad unmistakably commemorates tragic love and thus by contrivance succeeds at an abstract level. The same general theme is embodied much more fully in *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet* and *Fair Margaret and Sweet William*; but in contrast to *Barbara Allan* these insist strongly on a higher meaning only in versions embellished with that widely used symbol of true love, the intertwined briar and rose.

The *Three Ravens* with its speaking birds and dense symbolism also suggests rather more contriving than natural poetry would allow, while its superlative congener, the *Twa Corbies*, indisputably declares the hand of a conscious artist. Child could not bring himself to accept the latter, though he had evidence that it was every bit as traditional as the other, if not so old. He printed it with the inconclusive remark that it sounded "something like a cynical variation of the tender little English ballad"—meaning the *Three Ravens*. "Cynical variation" is apparently intended to leave the impression that some version of the *Three Ravens* suffered, at least in ballad quality, from sophisticated handling.

What led Child to reject the *Twa Corbies* was probably not so much its tone as its sheer perfection; such metrical felicity and freedom from irrelevancy were hardly to be expected in folk song. The older ballad is no less artificial, and it ends with a frank intrusion, "God send euery gentleman, / Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman"; but a certain roughness and incoherency appear to vouch for its subliterary origin and career. The *Twa Corbies* is less detailed and less exciting in content but more complex in meaning. Literally considered, it announces the practical interest of a pair of scavengers in a dead and

[35] A mere conjecture. There is some suggestion of a causal connection between the man's illness and Barbara Allan's resentment of the slight.

deserted knight. Most significantly, it is a kind of *Earth Song*, grimmer for lacking Christian reference and more plausible for being a symbolic structure rather than a rhetorical and dialectical exercise. Much of the power of the ballad comes through its evaluation of the knight from a scavenger's angle of vision and thus in nonhuman terms. The victim's desertion by hawk, hound, and lady—all emblematic of worldly felicity—is immediately significant of faithlessness and perhaps in the last instance of treachery, but the scene is thereby symbolically emptied of civilized values. Accordingly, the social amenities which tend to soften the fact of death are precluded, and the knight is seen simply—and terrifyingly—as an article of consumption, a mere incident in cosmic process which by various means returns all organic matter to that state whence it came. This commonplace of nature becomes excruciatingly evident when one of the corbies specifies the "bonny blue een" and the "gowden hair" as the first parts to be utilized. The same bird concludes the poem with a solemn observation, which is, the situation considered, positively bizarre:

> 'Mony a one for him makes mane,
> But nane sall ken where he is gane;
> Oer his white banes, when they are bare,
> The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

The speaker of the poem—the "I" of the first line—does not return and need not; for the experience finds its significant level of meaning in the last stanza.

Edward and *Lord Randal* leave as strong an impression of conscious art as the *Twa Corbies*, but probably have been saved from suspicion because of their conspicuous use of incremental repetition. Gummere professed to see in this device an archetypal feature and staked a good deal on it.[36] Yet in both of these ballads incremental repetition plainly subserves a structural principle which cannot be accounted for by an improvising throng—namely, the climactic ordering of parts. In *Edward* the mother's questions about the victim of her son's bloody sword elicit increasingly grave responses—hawk, horse, and then father. Lord Randal's meeting with his "true-love," his eating fried eels, and his mortal illness gradually show a causal relationship, and each new disclosure casts a deeper shadow across the central experience. When the principal has at last made known his predicament (patricide in *Edward*, poisoning in *Lord Randal*), he proclaims the extent of his temporal loss in a last testament, the parts of which are arranged in an ascending scale of interest culminating in a terrible curse. These symmetrical ballads cannot be easily faulted, nor can their excellence be plausibly explained by the process of communal creation or even re-creation.

[36] *The Popular Ballad*, pp. 117-134. For dissenting arguments, see Pound, *Poetic Origins*, pp. 121-135, and Gerould, pp. 105-107.

The foregoing discussion permits the observation that the best of the ballads show some significant resemblances. They appear to share a moral universe which is not certainly Christian and probably not primitive. Though of uncertain design, it vaguely recalls the world of *King Lear*, in which evil circumstances harass the just and the unjust alike. The characters appear to be resigned to their fate; and, if they allow themselves a comment, it is commonly irony born of hopelessness. At the center in each case is a rather simple tragic situation which can be known essentially from a very sketchy relation. Ordinarily, a good deal of the story is left to inference, and not all the information directly provided is of first importance to it. Only a slight impression of linear movement is created because the circumstances held up to view tend to work centripetally on an anguished moment, which is, strictly considered, only a short dramatic interval in the narrative continuum. Concrete particulars are chosen for their logical relevance to the central predicament and somewhat too for their symbolic force, as, for example, the "cork-heild schoone" which the Scottish nobles of *Sir Patrick Spens* were reluctant to wet. The contracted focus is regulated by the angle of representation and finally validated by the symbol which evolves. The measure of success is not story interest—indeed, most of the good ballads fail signally on this count—but abstract meaning or meanings. It is fair to say, I believe, that the quality of the experience developed by these ballads is more appropriate to lyrics of an objective kind than to narratives.

My examination of the anthology ballads points to the conclusion that their art is conscious and successful. To claim so much for them is not, however, to imply that they are equally successful or that even the very best deserve the status of monuments. Kittredge obfuscated the issue of achievement by invoking some of the greatest names in literature,[37] whose major work obviously lies several degrees of magnitude beyond any of the ballads. Their proper place is with the shorter, more or less narrative poems, of which the language affords a multitude between *Robene and Makyne* and *Sister Helen*; and in this broad category they appear to no disadvantage. These ballads are admittedly conspicuous for their lack of elegance and for their freedom from the influence of the schools. Their rhetoric is not classical, and their diction, though hardly colloquial, is assuredly not Latinate. But they are not on that account inartificial or inferior. So much formal contriving evidences an art which, though as yet imperfectly understood, is assuredly highly disciplined.[38]

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[37] *Op. cit.*, p. xxxi.

[38] I have left music out of account from a conviction that the ballads, though unquestionably written to be sung, exist primarily as poems. This is in no way to deny that a given ballad benefits from a melody which unobtrusively confirms its tone or that the music has technical interest, if not much independent value.

III

A moment's reflection will show that to claim distinctive form and superior excellence for the anthology ballads is to create a number of difficulties. Unless highly unlikely results are to be ascribed to communal re-creation, the existence of single and successful craftsmanship must be recognized for them and at no great distance from the earliest dates of record. An alternative is to consider as sophisticated adaptations the specimens which have been thought most worthy of notice; but ineptness would then become a test of genuineness. If the authenticity of the anthology pieces is granted and at the same time their exceptional ordering, the definition of a popular ballad as a folk song which tells a story has very limited usefulness. If the ballad is by origin mediaeval and if, as Wells states, the Robin Hood exemplars provide a "norm of style by which we may judge other ballads,"[39] the anthology pieces clearly belong elsewhere; for neither in idiom nor in internal form do they recall indisputably early ballads. To be sure, the quality ballads are not *sui generis*, however similar some of them may be, but in their exceptionalness they suggest reasonable objections to viewing Child's collection as a genre in any useful sense of the word.

It is unlikely that the term "popular ballad" can be validated even for very general use. The cultural circumstances under which Child's exemplars and others thought comparable[40] were produced cannot be known with any certainty and thus cannot warrant the attributive "popular" with respect to origins. Though doubtless popular by destination, they are not by that fact distinguishable from numerous other story poems.[41] It is not even feasible to limit "popular" to those pieces which have been transmuted in oral tradition, since this distinction assumes a restricted form. Unqualified "ballad," ringed though it is with sociological connotations, must be retained, in the absence of a better

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The fact that ballads have remained fairly intact and coherent in oral tradition is strong evidence that their accompaniment has always been sufficiently subdued to allow easy communication. Yet most of the ballads invite musical utterance; and, while not literally writing their own music, they suggest it, within broad limits, by rhythm and tone. *Barbara Allan*, for example, has attracted several dolefully romantic tunes. It would be absurd to discount the power of music to deepen the kind of tragic experience which ballads most successfully communicate, but it would be equally absurd to argue that music is necessary to their success. Many a valued ballad survives without music, while the music which attaches to some others of quality, including *Sir Patrick Spens*, is unimpressive, if not unworthy.

[39] *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

[40] Gerould, pp. 28-31, denied the inclusiveness of Child's collection, and Leach, ed., *The Ballad Book*, has anthologized specimens rejected by Child.

[41] Baldi, p. 42, asserts: "Non credo che sia possibile documentare per quegli anni altro senso della parola 'popolare' se non quello di 'rinvenuto fra il popolo'; né dimostrare che il popolo fosse allora visto altrimenti che il fedele e passivo depositario di un'arte dimenticata dalle classi colte."

term, to designate the whole class of short story poems in common measure and variations thereof.

If the popular ballad is then nothing definable, what principles of selection could have guided Child? A definite answer is of course impossible,[42] but it is a fair guess that he cast a net wide enough to include all but the most elegant story poems in common measure and couplets and then thinned his catch by imposing rather vague socioliterary requirements. He was apparently disposed to accept any specimen which recalled by its meter and stylistic devices[43] the more famous ballads in the early collections, whether or not there was much structural similarity. He was apparently disposed to reject whatever evidenced learning or the more objectionable features of the broadsides, especially sentimentality and intimacy of presentation. But he seems never to have settled upon the minimum requirements of a popular ballad, and there is no rational principle by which all of his selections can be associated. Critically considered, his collection is a mélange, diverse both as to matter and as to method. Although a model of editorial reliability and a storehouse of valuable information, it is not as a unit significant for literature.

Judged by the poems which wear the label, the ballad is an external form hospitable to narrative matter of any sort and indifferent to its management. This is not a very satisfactory definition, but further delimitation, whether by sociological or literary criteria, invites vitiating exceptions. Yet the ballad loses nothing by being at once more numerous and less definite than Child imagined; it is a form of social expression highly interesting in many of its exemplars for folklore and social anthropology, and nonetheless literature of intrinsic merit. Systematic study remains as feasible as ever, for numerous groupings are logically justified with respect to social use and structure.[44] It is perhaps needful to remark, however, that what is no more precisely definable than the ballad form cannot reasonably be traced back to the French *carole*[45] and the eleventh-century dancers of Kölbigk.[46] Furthermore, sociological data, though often necessary to the understanding of the ballads, cannot properly be invoked for purposes of classifying or evaluating them as literature.

Critical analysis appears just now to be the most useful approach to the ballads. More definite answers to questions relating to origin, age,

[42] See Gerould, pp. 27 f.

[43] E.g., understatement, questions and answers, alliterative formulas, incremental repetition.

[44] Many poems loosely classifiable as ballads are most properly to be considered under other headings, e.g., romance, *chanson d'aventure*, epic.

[45] W. P. Ker, *Collected Essays*, ed. Charles Whibley (London, 1925), II, 101-104; Chambers, p. 184.

[46] See Gerould, pp. 207-210; Wells, p. 203; Edward Schröder, "Die Tänzer von Kölbigk, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XVII (1896-97), 151.

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priority of competing versions, and transmission seemingly cannot be given, and purely historical scholarship in any case is not competent to deliver the ultimate value judgments needed to decide their literary status. The brief explications attempted in the preceding section suggest that attention to internal form, besides demonstrating the achievement of individual ballads, can lead to the recognition of new and less ambiguous groupings. Traditional classifications, usually according to subject and rhetorical furniture, have tended to create false impressions of uniformity and thus have had the effect of closing up lines of questioning most likely to reveal the intricacies of ballad structure. The art of the ballads is often of a respectably high order and accordingly deserving of serious critical study unfettered either by genetic fallacies or by historical relativism. This view appears to be shared by a number of recent anthologists, who in their discussions of individual ballads simply ignore the theoretical restraints on criticism which this article has considered and, as I believe, substantially removed.

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GEORG TRAKL AND RIMBAUD: A STUDY IN INFLUENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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EVEN IF Rimbaud had not influenced Trakl, there would be obvious parallels between the two poets. Both came from respectable provincial families, and both rebelled against their middle-class background. In their addiction to drugs, their sexual deviations, and their inability to feel at home even in the literary community, their lives are obvious models of the *poète maudit*. Moreover, both experienced a short, intense period of creative activity followed by a sudden break—suicide in one case, the abandonment of literature in the other.

However, such comparisons are scarcely meaningful except as a part of some larger investigation in, say, the sociology of literature. For a more directly literary comparison, one could cite their common use of themes such as childhood and metropolitan life and the *voyant* concept (explicit in Rimbaud, implicit in Trakl's prophetic tone and in the figures of seer and magician who appear in his poetry) that underlies their work. But more significant than parallels of personality or theme is a parallel in poetic technique—technique in its widest sense, as an expression of sensibility and as a qualification and definition of theme. For, despite the fact that the revolutionary elements in Trakl's work have not been acclaimed as have those in Rimbaud, the technical achievements of the two poets are part of a single chapter in the history of European literary styles. A mere listing of techniques common to them would afford us some insight into the manner in which modern poetry developed from traditional forms. But comparison need not stop here; there is evidence of a decisive influence of one poet upon the other, and we are thus given a unique opportunity to observe the way—comparable to the influence of Laforgue on Pound and Eliot—in which the technical innovations of one literature were adopted in another.

Not that Rimbaud's influence on Trakl has remained unknown all these years. Within a decade after Trakl's death a German-language journal in Rumania published a list of parallel passages.[1] But the significance of Trakl's "borrowings" from Rimbaud has never been explored. Most of these date from a short period in Trakl's development, the latter part of 1912, the very period in which he broke away from

[1] Adolf Menschendörfer, "Trakl und Rimbaud," *Klingsor: Siebenbürgische Zeitschrift*, II (Mar. 1925), 93-96. Several parallel passages may be found in Theodor Spoerri, *Georg Trakl: Strukturen in Persönlichkeit und Werk* (Bern, 1954), pp. 54-55, and Paul Mayer, "Automne transfiguré," *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, IV (1956), 233.

rhyme and adopted a type of free verse with many of the syntactical irregularities and shifts in perspective that we have come to associate with postsymbolist poetry throughout Europe. In the following pages I shall trace Rimbaud's influence as it appears from one poem to the next, depicting not only the points of contact between the two poets but, even more important, the main line of Trakl's development, a topic which, despite the large amount of Trakl criticism in the last decade, has scarcely been touched upon.[2]

Although we find no explicit mention of Rimbaud in Trakl's letters, his earliest biographers have stressed his interest in the French poet;[3] and in one of his letters of 1912 Trakl hints at wanting to follow in Rimbaud's steps through his expressed desire of going to Borneo to "unburden [himself] of the thunder gathering in [him]."[4] But the most conclusive evidence of his preoccupation with Rimbaud rests in the words and phrases which he echoed, not directly from the original text —though he knew French—but from the pedestrian translation of K. L. Ammer, which had appeared in Germany in 1907,[5] accompanied by a long biographical sketch. Our quotations from Rimbaud will follow this German text. To make the verbal parallels immediately clear to the reader, all similar words and phrases in the two poets will be italicized.

Trakl's earliest extant poems, collected in *Aus goldenem Kelch*, contain most of the clichés common to German poetry at the turn of the century. Foreign influences make themselves felt chiefly in his attempt to achieve the mellifluousness of Verlaine and to imitate the vague, dreamy atmosphere of Maeterlinck.[6] But we can discern a trace of Rimbaud's influence in a poem of 1908 or 1909, "Drei Träume," in which the poet dreams of exploring strange worlds, obviously reminiscent of those in "Le Bateau ivre":

> In meiner Seele dunklem Spiegel
> Sind Bilder niegeseh'ner Meere,
> Verlass'ner, tragisch phantastischer Länder,
> Zerfließend ins Blaue, Ungefähre.
>
> (II, 34)

[2] At least one study, an unpublished Innsbruck dissertation by Henrikas Nagys, "Georg Trakls Weg vom Impressionismus zum Expressionismus" (1949), attempts to work out Trakl's development in some detail, but its findings are marred by the rigid conceptions of impressionism and expressionism which the author applies throughout.

[3] Erwin Mahrholdt, "Der Mensch und Dichter Georg Trakl," in *Erinnerung an Georg Trakl* (Innsbruck, 1926), pp. 60-62; Paul Wiegler, "Leben Georg Trakls," *Die Literatur*, XXVIII (1926), 577. See also Spoerri, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

[4] *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Wolfgang Schneditz (Salzburg, 1938-49) III, 28. All further quotations from Schneditz' edition of Trakl will be indicated in the text.

[5] *Leben und Dichtung* (Leipzig, 1907). All quotations from Ammer's Rimbaud will be indicated in the text.

[6] For a more detailed account of the style and sources of Trakl's apprentice work see my paper, "The Early Poems of Georg Trakl," *GR*, XXXII (1957), 45-61.

Here Rimbaud's influence extends no further than the subject matter, for the two poems are entirely different in method. While Rimbaud gives his journey an air of concrete reality through explicit descriptions both of the earthly landscape from which he starts and of the cosmic areas through which he travels, the early Trakl characteristically labels his vision a dream and provides vague images that are often little more than abstractions.

In his poems of 1910-12, however, Trakl left behind the extreme subjectivity of his apprentice work and achieved a style exemplified by the following stanzas from "Westliche Dämmerung," which contains one of the few Rimbaud allusions of this period:

> Ein *trunknes Schiff* dreht am Kanal
> Sich träg in grünen Sonnengarben.
> Ein heiteres Konzert von Farben
> Hebt leise an vorm Hospital.
>
> Ein Quirinal zeigt finstere Pracht.
> In Spiegeln bunte Mengen kreisen
> Auf Brückenbögen und Geleisen.
> Vor Banken bleich ein Dämon wacht.
> (II, 140)

The style is marked by concrete images and short, undeveloped scenes with little apparent relation to one another. Rimbaud's drunken boat is but one of many diverse images linked only by the overall impression of a half-mad world, with the poet standing outside the scene as a mere observer. Like Rimbaud, Trakl moves easily from directly observable objects to such a mythical phenomenon as the demon, and from pleasant to repulsive images, all of which he treats with a similarly matter-of-fact tone.

"Westliche Dämmerung" might be classified among Trakl's apprentice poems on the ground that the poet did not wish to publish it; but its technique and thematic interests are typical of the rhymed poems that make up the first third of *Die Dichtungen*, the posthumously collected edition of poems which Trakl had authorized for publication. Among the earlier poems in this collection we find occasional verbal echoes from Ammer's Rimbaud, for instance, the image "grüne Löcher voll Verwesung" (from "Im roten Laubwerk voll Gitarren") echoing the opening words, "Ein grünes Loch," from "Le Dormeur du val." More significant perhaps is Trakl's use of the word *Abort* in these lines from "Die Ratten":

> Da tauchen leise herauf die Ratten
>
> Und huschen pfeifend hier und dort
> Und ein gräulicher Dunsthauch wittert

Ihnen nach aus dem *Abort,*
Den geisterhaft der Mondschein durchzittert...
(I, 41)

Here he invests his spectacle of decay with some of the brashness of manner that characterizes "Les premières communions": "Sie mußte am *Abort* die heil'ge Nacht verbringen" (Ammer, p. 169). As in "Westliche Dämmerung," Trakl's vision of a disintegrating world is conveyed by concrete phenomena. The same concreteness characterizes "Vorstadt im Föhn," in which, after a succession of equally horrifying images, he presents a contrasting vision:

Aus Wolken tauchen schimmernde Alleen,
Erfüllt von schönen *Wägen,* kühnen Reitern.
Dann *sieht* man auch ein *Schiff* auf Klippen scheitern
Und manchmal rosenfarbene *Moscheen.*
(I, 59)

This echoes two of the visions of *Une Saison en Enfer,* the first from "Alchimie du Verbe," "Ich gewöhnte mich an die einfache Halluzination: ich *sah* sehr deutlich eine *Moschee* an Stelle eines Hüttenwerks ... *Wagen* auf den Himmelswegen," the second from "Adieu," "Manchmal *sehe* ich am Himmel endlose Gestade ... Ein großes goldenes *Schiff* über mir bewegt seine bunten Wimpel im Morgenwind" (Ammer, pp. 203, 214). Trakl's habit of juxtaposing scenes of decay with supernatural visions was not necessarily acquired from Rimbaud; for, as has been pointed out elsewhere,[7] his concern with sharply contrasting aspects of experience is evident in his earliest work as well as in remarks about himself in his letters. But the concreteness and precision of his images—whether those of decay or of wild, hallucinatory visions—may well have found its model in Rimbaud, and indirectly also in Baudelaire.

A somewhat later echo from Rimbaud may be found in "Winkel am Wald," a poem written in mid-1912, towards the end of his period of rhymed verse. Here Trakl employs a six-stress line that seems to anticipate his subsequent free verse:

Des Todes reine Bilder schaun von Kirchenfenstern;
Doch wirkt ein blutiger Grund sehr trauervoll und düster.
Das Tor blieb heut verschlossen. Den Schlüssel hat der Küster.
Im Garten spricht die Schwester freundlich mit Gespenstern.
(I, 33)

The relatively loose form of "Winkel im Wald"—the stanzaic structure is hardly noticeable because of the extended line length and the frequent breaks in sentences and subject matter—causes the unde-

[7] Clemens Heselhaus, "Die Elis-Gedichte von Georg Trakl," *DVS,* XXVIII (1954), especially 409-411.

veloped dramatic situations which make up the poem to seem even more isolated from one another than in the examples cited earlier. What these situations have in common is a general sense of desolation, and in this respect at least they bear a close affinity to Rimbaud's prose poem "Enfance," from which Trakl drew his image of the sexton and the key: "Das Schloß ist zu verkaufen; die Jalousien sind heruntergelassen. *Der Pfarrer wird wahrscheinlich den Schlüssel der Kapelle genommen haben.* Die Wächterhäuschen um den Park sind leer. Das Gitter ringsherum ist so hoch, daß man nichts als die rauschenden Wipfel sieht. Sonst ist nichts zu sehn drinnen" (Ammer, p. 221). Although Rimbaud's scene is developed in greater detail and more coherently than Trakl's, it is still only one of several isolated scenes that make up the prose poem. In the following section of "Enfance," Rimbaud lists a series of seemingly random images and scenes, formally held together only by their parallel syntax and their general relation to the scene of desolation above:

Es ist eine Uhr, die nicht schlägt.
Es ist ein Schneeloch mit einem Nest von weißen Tieren.
Es ist eine Kathedrale, die versinkt, und ein See, der überschwillt.
(Ammer, p. 222)

This basic syntactical pattern, as well as the desolation theme, is used for much the same effect by Trakl in the first of his free-verse poems, "Psalm," published in October 1912[8] (I quote from the first two stanzas):

Es ist ein Licht, das der Wind ausgelöscht hat.
Es ist ein Heidekrug, den am Nachmittag ein Betrunkener verläßt.
Es ist ein Weinberg, verbrannt und schwarz mit Löchern voll von Spinnen.
Es ist ein Raum, den sie mit Milch getüncht haben.
Der Wahnsinnige ist gestorben. *Es ist* eine Insel der Südsee,
Den Sonnengott zu empfangen. Man rührt die Trommeln.

Die Männer führen kriegerische Tänze auf.
Die *Frauen* wiegen die Hüften in *Schlinggewächsen* und Feuer*blumen*,
Wenn das *Meer* singt. O unser verlorenes Paradies.
Die Nymphen haben die goldenen Wälder verlassen.
Man begräbt den Fremden. Dann hebt ein Flimmerregen an.
Der Sohn des Pan erscheint in Gestalt eines Erdarbeiters,
Der den Mittag am glühenden Asphalt verschläft.
Es sind kleine Mädchen in einem Hof in Kleidchen voll
herzzerreißender Armut!
Es sind Zimmer, erfüllt von Akkorden und Sonaten.
(I, 61)

[8] Although the dating of all Trakl's poems has not yet been established, we can set up the chronology of those poems (the greater part of his mature work) which first appeared in the *Brenner*. According to an unsigned note in *Erinnerung an Georg Trakl* (p. 15), a volume issued by Trakl's Innsbruck associates, the poems were printed shortly after and in the order of their composition.

The South Sea scene at the opening—the only place in Trakl's mature poetry in which he employs exotic imagery of this sort—directly echoes a scene at the opening of "Enfance":

> Am Waldrand läuten die Traum*blumen*, läuten, leuchten und funkeln,—dort sitzt das Mädchen mit dem Orangenmund, die Knie gekreuzt, in der klaren Sintflut, die von den Wiesen grollt, nackt, von Regenbogen, Blumen und dem Meer umschattet, umflutet, umkleidet.
>
> Frauen, die auf den Terrassen am Meere sich ergehen; Kinder and Riesinnen, stolze Negerinnen in graugrünen *Schlinggewächsen . . . kleine* fremde *Mädchen*, die ein süßes Leid bedrückt [Ammer, pp. 220-221].

For both poets the exotic setting stands in symbolic contrast to the scenes of desolation.[9] But even more important than this thematic parallel is the probability that his study of Rimbaud's prose poems may have given Trakl the impetus to break away from the rhymed quatrains in which he had hitherto written. In his close imitation of Rimbaud's manner in "Psalm" he had taken the first step toward that "liberation of the poetic figure" which Rilke has cited as his characteristic achievement.[10]

Not that Trakl was unaware of previous examples of free verse. But one need only compare his use of the medium with that of writers such as Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Whitman to recognize an important difference. For Hölderlin and most of Trakl's predecessors in the form, free verse was a vehicle for personal monologue, for recording the questions, assertions, and exhortations of a single, all-pervasive consciousness. It is noteworthy, moreover, that Trakl's earliest attempts at free verse, included among his apprentice poems, are not only entirely unlike his later attempts, but fall distinctly within the tradition of Hölderlin and Nietzsche.[11] Compare, for instance, these lines from the early "Das Morgenlied," "Nun schreite herab, titanischer Bursche, / Und wecke die vielgeliebte Schlummernde dir!" (II, 113) or these from the early "Traumwandler,"

> Wo bist du, die mir zur Seite ging,
> Wo bist du, Himmelsangesicht?
> Ein rauher Wind höhnt mir ins Ohr: du Narr!
> Ein Traum! Ein Traum! Du Tor!
> Und doch, und doch! Wie war es einst,
> Bevor ich in Nacht und Verlassenheit schritt?
> (I', 114)

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[9] Comparison of these two passages also provides evidence that Trakl borrowed from the Ammer translation, since Trakl echoed Ammer's word *Schlinggewächsen* instead of the original French *mousse*.

[10] *Briefe aus den Jahren 1914 bis 1921*, ed. Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber (Leipzig, 1928), p. 126.

[11] One of these attempts, "Klagelied," shows a few stylistic features of his later free verse. I have discussed these features in some detail in "The Early Poems of Georg Trakl," but I am at a loss to explain how they could appear in this poem and in no others of his early period.

with these from the later "Sebastian im Traum,"

> Mutter trug das Kindlein im weißen Mond,
> Im Schatten des Nußbaums, uralten Holunders,
> Trunken vom Safte des Mohns, der Klage der Drossel.
> (I, 103)

Here, following the example of Rimbaud, Trakl reduces the rhetorical element to a minimum, standing back, as it were, to let his vision reveal itself without expressed commentary—one thinks of his statement to Buschbeck, "Du magst mir glauben, daß es mir nicht leicht fällt und niemals leicht fallen wird, mich bedingungslos dem Darzustellenden unterzuordnen" (III, 26). Moreover, virtually the only intrusions of the first person in his mature verse take the form of exclamations—like the line, "O unser verlorenes Paradies," from "Psalm"—which serve temporarily to shift the point of view to a personal plane, from which it returns almost immediately to the impersonal. And even in his use of such exclamations he seems to have learned from Rimbaud. For instance, in "De Profundis," a poem published shortly after "Psalm," he echoes Rimbaud's exclamation, "O wie traurig, diese Stunden," which had followed the tropical scene in "Enfance":

> *Es ist* ein Stoppelfeld, in das ein schwarzer Regen fällt.
> *Es ist* ein brauner Baum, der einsam dasteht.
> *Es ist* ein Zischelwind, der leere Hütten umkreist—
> *Wie traurig* dieser Abend.[12]
> (I, 67)

But the free-verse style of "Psalm" and of these lines from "De Profundis" was only a half-way point to the manner of his later verse. The syntactical monotony and the almost uniformly great length of the lines, though effective for a single poem, could easily have degenerated into a mannerism. The style of "Psalm," through its relative lack of variation, has more in common with that of rhymed poems like "Winkel im Wald" than with the highly flexible manner of his subsequent verse. Only in "Unterwegs," published in June 1913, was he again to employ the style of "Psalm."

The full flowering of Trakl's free-verse style occurs in "Helian" (written in December-January, 1912-13),[13] one of his longest, most celebrated, and difficult poems, and at the same time the poem which contains the most numerous echoes from Rimbaud. Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of the new style, in comparison to that of "Psalm" and the rhymed poems, is the absence of neatly parallel rows of images.

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[12] Another example of Trakl's tendency to follow Ammer, even when the latter deviated from the French. The original of Ammer's "O wie traurig, diese Stunden" was "Quel ennui, l'heure du 'cher corps' et 'cher cœur' !"

[13] Evidence for the dating of "Helian" was presented by Karl Borromäus Heinrich, "Die Erscheinung Georg Trakls," in *Erinnerung an Georg Trakl*, p. 92.

To be sure, the poem, like all of Trakl's mature verse, is built almost entirely out of images and miniature dramatic situations; but here the images are no longer listed with the sameness of form that characterized the earlier work. Consider, for example, the second stanza of "Helian":

> Abends auf der Terrasse betranken wir uns mit braunem Wein.
> Rötlich glüht der Pfirsich im Laub;
> Sanfte Sonate, frohes Lachen. (I, 84)

Each line is not only varied in length and syntax, but each proceeds also from a different point of view. The first line, in the first person and past tense, recites a memory, though the narrative of which it seems to be a part is never actually developed (this technique of employing undeveloped dramatic situations is comparable to what Yvor Winters has aptly called "pseudo-reference" in his analysis of certain modern American poets.[14] The second line, through its shift to the present tense and third person, seems, superficially at least, unrelated to the preceding line. The third line contains no verb, but merely lists two auditory phenomena, each qualified by an adjective. Not only here but throughout the poem we find constant shifts of perspective, with changes from tense to tense and person to person. Sometimes, when a sudden imperative is introduced—as in the line, "Lasset das Lied auch des Knaben gedenken" (I, 87)—it seems as though a new voice has intruded from nowhere. Characters and places are familiarly alluded to without previous identification; and in the breaks between stanzas we sense the presence of mysterious, unexpressed events, or, to use the metaphor applied by Rilke in his remarks on "Helian," "large, unpossessable plains" that are, as it were, "fenced off" by the short stanzas.[15] Metrically, too, there are constant and unexpected modulations, whereas the rhymed poems had remained either strictly iambic or trochaic and even "Psalm" had maintained largely an iambic pattern.

These various techniques which characterize "Helian" are not, of course, peculiar to Trakl alone, but, as part of the general heritage of symbolism, have become commonplaces in modern poetry throughout Europe. Yet in German poetry I can find no models—not even the later work of Hölderlin—that could have initiated Trakl into these techniques as all-pervasively as did Rimbaud. To take an example, compare his habit of using the conjunction *oder* to join two statements that are not actually alternatives, as in:

> Über die Weide nachts ein Schäfer seine Herde führt.
> Oder es sind Schreie im Schlaf,
> Wenn ein eherner Engel im Hain den Menschen antritt,
> (I, 87)

[14] *Primitivism and Decadence: A Study of American Experimental Poetry* (New York, 1937), pp. 26-44.

[15] *Briefe aus den Jahren 1914 bis 1921*, p. 35.

with these lines from the "Es ist" series in "Enfance": "Es ist ein kleiner verlassener Wagen im Buschholz. Oder er kommt den Fußsteig herab, laufend, mit Bändern umwunden" (Ammer p. 222).

Or, to take another example from the same poems, one may compare their wholly oblique manner of scenic and thematic progression. Thus, in preparing for the monastery setting that dominates the second section of "Helian," Trakl gradually introduces, towards the end of the first section, such images suggesting bareness as

> Wenn es Herbst geworden ist,
> Zeigt sich nüchterne Klarheit im Hain...
> In kahlen Gezweigen feiert der Himmel,
> (I, 84)

and, in the same way, anticipating the scenes of the degenerate family in the third section, employs such images as "morschem Geäst" and "Mauern voll Aussatz" at the end of the monastery scene. Similarly, in "Enfance" Rimbaud makes his transition from the exoticism of the South Sea scene ("stolze Negerinnen in graugrünen Schlinggewächsen") to the utter desolation of the succeeding scene by gradually introducing images suggesting moods of longing and sorrow—"junge Mütter und große Schwestern mit Blicken voll Pilgerschaften... kleine fremde Mädchen, die ein süßes Leid bedrückt" (Ammer, pp. 220-221). As in so much modern poetry, the mere succession of concrete images and events has become the means of meaningful poetic statement.

But Rimbaud's influence on "Helian" also takes more specific form. In at least four places in the poem Trakl again imitates Rimbaud's images of desolation. Thus, the powerful passage of the degenerate family,

> Die *Schwestern* sind ferne zu weißen Greisen gegangen.
> Nachts fand sie der Schläfer unter den Säulen im Hausflur,
> Zurückgekehrt von traurigen *Pilgerschaften.*
>
> O wie starrt von *Kot* und *Würmern* ihr *Haar,*
> (I, 86)

looks back to a phrase in the tropical section of "Enfance," "große *Schwestern* mit Blicken voll *Pilgerschaften*" (Ammer, p. 220), and to Rimbaud's vision of himself at the end of *Une Saison en Enfer,* "Ich sehe mich wieder, die Haut von *Kot* und Pest zerfressen, die *Haare* und die Achselhöhle voll von *Würmern* und noch größere *Würmer* im Herzen..." (Ammer, p. 214). Trakl's image of the "verwüstete Garten" echoes an identical phrase in the prose *illumination* "Ouvriers" (Ammer, p. 230). The line, "Am Abend sinkt das weiße Wasser in Graburnen," which signals the shift to a mood of desolation in the opening section of "Helian," is an adaptation of a line from the lyric

"Larme" (*Une Saison* version), "Am Abend begann / das Wasser des Hains im Sand zu versinken" (Ammer, p. 202), and the exclamation, "O wie traurig ist dieses Wiedersehn," like the line cited above from "De Profundis," echoes an exclamation from "Enfance."

Like many of Trakl's most successful poems, "Helian" is constructed of contrasting visions—scenes of desolation and disintegration alternating with moments of spiritual illumination. Significantly, however, his borrowings in "Helian" are not, like those in "Psalm" and earlier poems, confined largely to Rimbaud's images of desolation; for in "Helian" we can recognize the French writer's imprint among the poem's most intensely religious passages. For example, the opening stanza of the fourth section,

> Ein erhabenes Schicksal sinnt den *Kidron* hinab,
> Wo die Zeder, ein weiches Geschöpf,
> Sich unter den blauen Brauen des Vaters entfaltet,
> Über die Weide nachts ein Schäfer seine Herde führt.
> Oder es sind Schreie im *Schlaf*,
> Wenn ein eherner Engel im Hain den Menschen antritt,
> Das Fleisch des Heiligen auf *glühendem Rost hinschmilzt*,
> (I, 87)

owes its allusion to the Cedron[16] as well as its bold images of the hero on the grill to the lyric, "Le loup criait," from *Une Saison*:

> O daß ich *schliefe*, o daß ich *brenne*
> auf Salomos Altären.
> Mein Blut, es ränne
> auf den *Rost* und hernach
> in den *Kidronbach*.
> (Ammer, p. 205)

But perhaps the most interesting of Trakl's tranformations is his use of the "son of Pan" figure, which he found in the prose *illumination* "Antique":

> Reizender *Sohn des Pan!* In deinem Antlitz, das Blüten und Beeren krönen, *bewegen* sich zwei kostbare Kugeln, deine *Augen*... Durch deine blonden *Arme* zittern Glockenklänge... dein Leib ist *schön* wie der des Weibes und stark wie der des Mannes. Geh hin in der *Nacht* und *bewege* deine herrlichen *Beine*, das eine und das andere, ganz langsam, *Schritt* um *Schritt* [Ammer, p. 219].

Trakl's first reference to the son of Pan occurred in "Psalm," "Der Sohn des Pan erscheint in Gestalt eines Erdarbeiters, / Der den Mittag am glühenden Asphalt verschläft" (I, 61). Here, using a method

[16] It is perhaps worth noting that another of Trakl's Biblical allusions, the reference to the Bethesda pool in "Kleines Konzert" (I, 30) was apparently suggested by Rimbaud's fragment, "Bethsaïda, la piscine des cinq galeries..." (Ammer, pp. 47-48), though Trakl's allusion in this case contains no verbal echoes. Trakl does not mention Bethesda by name nor, for that matter, did the faulty version of Rimbaud's poem that was known to the world at that time.

analogous to that of the early Eliot (in fact, another line from "Psalm," "Die Nymphen haben die goldenen Wälder verlassen," parallels Eliot's famous "The nymphs are departed"), he reduces his mythological figure to the dreary role he might play in the modern waste land. The figure appears again at the opening of "Helian":

> In den einsamen Stunden des Geistes
> Ist es schön, in der Sonne zu gehn
> An den gelben Mauern des Sommers hin.
> Leise klingen die *Schritte* im Gras; doch immer schläft
> *Der Sohn des Pan* im grauen Marmor.
> (I, 84)

Throughout most of the first section of the poem Trakl portrays the everyday world of the senses in their relatively harmonious aspect. The far more dramatic events that occupy the later parts of the poem—both those of a destructive and those of a positively religious nature—are only lightly anticipated in the first part. Thus, the son of Pan, as a representative of ineffable forces scarcely perceptible to the temporal world, lies dormant at the beginning of the poem. In fact he can only take the form of decorative statuary, like that described in Trakl's earlier poem "Musik im Mirabell." In the second part of "Helian," after the shift of scene to the monastery, Trakl again echoes part of Rimbaud's apostrophe to the son of Pan:

> *Schön* ist der Mensch und erscheinend im *Dunkel,*
> Wenn er staunend *Arme* und *Beine bewegt.*
> Und in purpurnen Höhlen stille die *Augen* rollen.
> (I, 85)

In this praise of the spiritual qualities that appear in moments of inward illumination Trakl has transformed Ammer's clumsy prose into vibrant poetry. Especially with the participles, *erscheinend*—unconventional in its use as a predicate adjective—and *staunend*, he is able to suggest ineffable forces behind and beyond the sensory world that dominated the first part of the poem.

After "Helian" we find only one more extended use of Rimbaud in Trakl's poetry—in "Elis," published in July 1913—and again, as with the earlier poems, he borrows images for a scene of desolation. In the course of this poem he gradually shifts from a paradise-like scene to a barren, disintegrating world. Significantly he echoes Rimbaud in the closing stanzas of the poem:

> Zeichen und Sterne
> *Versinken* leise im Abendweiher.
>
> Hinter dem Hügel ist es Winter geworden.
>
> Blaue Tauben
> *Trinken* nachts den *eisigen Schweiß,*

Der von Elis' kristallener *Stirne* rinnt.
Immer tönt
An schwarzen Mauern *Gottes* einsamer *Wind.*
(I, 97)

The source is again "Larme":

Fern allen *Dörflern, fern* allen Herden
und Vögeln—was hab ich getrunken . . .
Etwas, was mir den *Schweiß* in die *Stirne* getrieben . . .[17]

. . . Am Abend begann
das Wasser *des Hains* im Sand zu versinken.
Gottes Wind füllte mit Eis seine Lachen an.
Weinend sah ich Gold—und konnte nichts mehr *trinken,*
(Ammer, p. 202)

which he had echoed in a line of "Helian" and, even earlier, in "De Profundis":

Ein Schatten bin ich *ferne* finsteren *Dörfern*
Gottes Schweigen
Trank ich aus dem Brunnen *des Hains.*
(I, 67)

In Trakl's subsequent poetry we find occasional traces of Rimbaud, if only in individual words, for instance, the exclamation "Reinheit!" from "Die Heimkehr," which echoes the exclamation at the close of "L'Impossible" (Ammer, p. 211). But for all practical purposes his borrowings from Rimbaud ended with "Helian" and "Elis," two poems in which he brought his free-verse method to perfection and after which what little stylistic development he showed took the direction of the Hölderlinian hymn. Yet in another sense, though Trakl remained independent of Rimbaud's direct influence, we see the shadow of the French poet over at least one part of his later work—his four prose poems. These poems, of which the first, "Verwandlung des Bösen," was published in October 1913 and the last, "Offenbarung und Untergang," was written in May 1914, do not contain verbal echoes such as we noted in earlier poems, but their basic stylistic method follows the tradition established by the *Illuminations.* In such a typical passage as the following, from "Traum und Umnachtung,"

Nachtlang wohnte er in kristallener Höhle und der Aussatz wuchs silbern auf seiner Stirne. Ein Schatten ging er den Saumpfad hinab unter herbstlichen Sternen. Schnee fiel, und blaue Finsternis erfüllte das Haus. Eines Blinden klang die harte Stimme des Vaters und beschwor das Grauen. Weh der gebeugten Er-

[17] Here again Trakl echoes Ammer's *Stirne,* a word missing from the original French, "Quelque liqueur d'or qui fait suer." Interestingly enough *Stirne* became one of Trakl's most frequent nouns, used fully 43 times in *Die Dichtungen,* though only four times before "De Profundis," the first poem in which he echoed "Larme."

scheinung der Frauen. Unter erstarrten Händen verfielen Frucht und Gerät dem entsetzten Geschlecht [I, 159-160],

there is none of the anecdotal or reflective tone that characterizes the prose poetry of Baudelaire or Mallarmé, nor do we find the narrative cohesiveness of Lautréamont. In fact, Trakl's prose poems differ from his free verse only in their greater rapidity of action and density of narrative content. Moreover, their affinity to his free verse is especially evident when one compares them to his rather conventional early prose sketches, for example, to the opening lines from "Traumland": "Manchmal muß ich wieder jener stillen Tage gedenken, die mir sind wie ein wundersames, glücklich verbrachtes Leben..." (I, 11). Whatever connection these poems have with Rimbaud must first be traced through Trakl's free verse, which in turn, as we have shown, developed largely through his study of Rimbaud's prose.

Our attempt to describe the points of contact between these two poets should not, of course, obscure the considerable differences between them. The more obvious contrasts in their personalities—for instance, Rimbaud's brash iconclasm as against Trakl's frequent helplessness and passivity—have been touched upon elsewhere.[18] The differences in the nature of their literary achievement can perhaps be set into relief by reference to the two other figures who exercised the strongest influences on Trakl—Hölderlin and Dostoevsky.

From Hölderlin he borrowed certain characteristic words and phrases,[19] but these are apparently fewer in number than those from Rimbaud, and the stylistic influence is certainly one of tone rather than of vocabulary and syntax. Yet one cannot minimize the importance of Hölderlin for Trakl; for the sense of doom and the tragic conception of life that underlie Trakl's work seem to show the mediation of the earlier poet.

Dostoevsky's influence, evident in the constant recurrence of the theme of guilt throughout Trakl's work, is at its most conspicuous in the poem "Sonja," whose protagonist, based on the heroine of *Crime and Punishment*, is one of several masks for the figure of the haunted woman-penitent found in many of his poems. The slow, gnawing process of guilt and penitence depicted in "Sonja" has but little in common with the dramatic, quickly surmounted guilt that characterizes the hero

[18] By Spoerri, pp. 22, 33. A brief attempt is also made by Klaus Simon, in *Traum und Orpheus* (Salzburg, 1955), pp. 21-22, to stress both the stylistic and personal differences between the poets; but the comparison is marred by Simon's apparent contempt for Rimbaud's literary achievement. Since the completion of this paper I have seen Eduard Lachmann's "Trakl und Rimbaud" (*Stimmen der Zeit*, Oct. 1956, pp. 70-72), which compares Trakl's "Menschheit" with Rimbaud's "Le Mal" to distinguish a "Christian" Trakl from a "pagan" Rimbaud.

[19] For examples of parallel passages, see Ernst Bayerthal, *Georg Trakls Lyrik: Analytische Untersuchung* (Frankfort, 1926), and Spoerri, pp. 56-57.

of *Une Saison en Enfer*. Moreover, in Trakl's lines, "Gefühl in den Augenblicken totenähnlichen Seins: Alle Menschen sind der Liebe wert. Erwachend fühlst du die Bitternis der Welt; darin ist alle deine ungelöste Schuld; dein Gedicht eine unvollkommene Sühne"[20]—lines which could well serve as a statement of Trakl's poetics—we are aware not only of the gulf that separates him from Rimbaud, but also of the bond which ties him, like the author of the *Stundenbuch* and *Geschichten vom lieben Gott*, to a mode of thinking which we have come to associate with Russia.

Even in language and technique we cannot credit Rimbaud with more than a few of the peculiarities of Trakl's style. At most Rimbaud served as a central formative influence during a transitional stage in Trakl's development; most of his stylistic innovations—for instance, his habit of creating neuter nouns such as *ein Abgelebtes* and compounds such as *Novemberzerstörung*—are his own, so much so that one of Trakl's French translators complains at some length of the difficulties in rendering Trakl's mannerisms into the native language of Rimbaud.[21]

Yet none of their sometimes sharp divergences detract from the common role that Rimbaud and Trakl may come to hold in literary history—their success in breaking the logical junctures of conventional poetic language and their consequent ability to define a type of visionary experience that had never before found a place in poetry. The history of Trakl's impact has been all too recent (largely since the end of World War II) to be fully clear to us, though we are given a hint of its significance when the editor of *Trakl-Studien*, in his preface to the series, compares his role in German literature to that of Rimbaud and Hopkins in French and English.[22]

There is, to be sure, no evidence that Trakl himself was aware of the revolutionary implications of his style. By and large his comments on his own work concern themselves with technicalities of revision and publication, while the few remarks he has offered on the work of other poets—for instance, his condemnation of Whitman on moral grounds[23]—do not touch upon questions of poetic language. One finds nothing comparable to Rimbaud's *voyant* letters, nor can one discern any linguistic theory—like the one Ezra Pound discovered in the writings of Ernest Fenollosa almost simultaneously with Trakl's experiments—to account for his innovations.

Still, one looks in vain in the work of Trakl's contemporaries for as sharp a break with the past as one finds, for instance, in "Helian." Such typical lines of Georg Heym as "Ein weißes Tanzkleid kommt,

[20] *Der Brenner*, V (1915), 6.

[21] Jacques Legrand, "Übersetzungsprobleme bei Georg Trakl in französischer Sicht," *Akzente*, III (1956), 415-419.

[22] Ignaz Zangerle, in Lachmann's *Kreuz und Abend* (Salzburg, 1954), p. 8.

[23] See Spoerri, p. 37.

in fettem Glanz / Ein nackter Hals und bleiweiß ein Gesicht"[24] are obviously closely akin in style and content to Trakl's poems of 1911 and early 1912—for instance, "Westliche Dämmerung" and "Die Ratten" —but they reveal none of the startling innovations of Trakl's subsequent verse. Ernst Stadler's achievement, the adaptation of free verse to the needs of a dynamic and highly self-conscious form of monologue, is still further removed from Trakl's.[25] Even Else Lasker-Schüler, whom Trakl admired and who may have influenced the shorter free-verse line that he used in many poems, did not attempt nearly so radical an experiment with language. And it goes without saying that the innovations that Hofmannsthal, George, and Rilke (of whom Trakl could have known nothing later than *Neue Gedichte* or *Requiem* when he developed his free verse) had introduced during the previous decade or two were of a very different order from those of Rimbaud and Trakl.

But it was Rilke—perhaps the shrewdest of all Trakl's critics—who first understood the historical import of Trakl's work. In 1917, fully a generation before Trakl was to gain currency among poets and critics, Rilke wrote, "In der Geschichte des Gedichts sind die Bücher Trakls wichtige Beiträge zur Befreiung der dichterischen Figur. Eine neue Dimension des geistigen Raums scheint mit ihnen ausgemessen und das gefühls-stoffliche Vorurteil widerlegt, als ob in der Richtung der Klage nur Klage sei—: auch dort ist wieder Welt."[26]

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[24] It is interesting that these lines from Heym's poem on Ophelia were inspired by a Rimbaud poem far earlier and stylistically more conventional than the Rimbaud poems which influenced Trakl. For an illuminating discussion of the influence of this poem on French and German poets, see Bernhard Blume, "Das ertrunkene Mädchen: Rimbaud's Ophélie und die deutsche Literatur," *Germ.-Rom. Monatsschr.*, XXXV (1954), 108-119.

[25] Trakl's style is compared to that of Heym and Stadler in Karl Ludwig Schneider's *Der bildhafte Ausdruck in den Dichtungen Georg Heyms, Georg Trakls und Ernst Stadlers* (Heidelberg, 1954), but, despite some valuable insights, Schneider does not sufficiently stress the features that distinguish Trakl from these poets.

[26] *Briefe aus den Jahren 1914 bis 1921*, pp. 126-127.

SOME USES OF ANGEL ICONOGRAPHY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

HARRY MORRIS

IN THE "General Prologue" to the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer describes his summoner "That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face" (line 624).[1] In mosaics, paintings, and manuscript illuminations of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, however, red was used primarily by the masters to indicate that an angel of that color was a seraph and not a cherub; the cherubim were usually blue. I here propose some speculations upon the way in which this color convention became established and some observations upon its appearance in English literature.

Of the nine orders of celestial intelligences given rank by Dionysius the Areopagite,[2] only the highest two were identified by painters through traditional colors:

> Two colours had ... been recognized as invested with a special significance, red as the colour of flame, and symbolical of holy love (caritas), blue as significant of heavenly contemplation or divine knowledge. And in the later tradition of Christian art (from the 9th century onwards) these two colours were as a general rule assigned, red more especially to the seraphim as the spirits of love, and blue to the cherubim as spirits of knowledge or of contemplation ...[3]

Dionysius gave the seraphim precedence over all other orders;[4] most mediaeval Christian philosophers who concern themselves with the angelic hierarchy follow Dionysius.[5] St. Bernard associates angelic function with angelic rank and provides what may be a clue to the origin of the traditional color:

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[1] *The Poetical Works of Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston, 1933), p. 26. Robinson's note on this line states that "The cherubim were usually depicted with faces as red as fire" (p. 768). It is part of the purpose of the present essay to prove that cherubim were depicted usually as blue; the seraphim were red.

[2] *Œuvres complètes du Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite*, trans. Gandillac (Paris, 1943). Dionysius was translated from the Greek into the Latin by Erigena in the ninth century. The translation into French is the only one in a modern language. All references to Dionysius are to this edition.

[3] *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, ed. Sir William Smith and Samuel Cheetham (London, 1893), p. 87. Dante represents Love (Caritas) "so red that hardly would she be noted in the fire" (*Purg.*, XXIX, 122-123). *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Carlyle, Okey, and Wicksteed (New York, 1944), p. 366.

[4] Dionysius, pp. 205-207. Although Dionysius never states specifically that the seraphim precede the cherubim, in every list he places them first. He states also that their function is to love God. The relationship of function to rank is considered in the quotation from St. Bernard immediately following.

[5] These include, in addition to St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, Hugo of St. Victor, St. Bonaventura, St. Isidore of Seville, and others.

It is permitted [the cherubim] to drink to the full from the fountain itself, the Lord Jesus... God, who is Himself love, has so drawn [the seraphim] to, and absorbed them in Him, and raised them to the same ardour of His holy affection, that they appear to be of one Spirit with Him... For the word Cherubim signifies fulness of *knowledge*; and Seraphin, *inflaming* or *inflamed*... All these spirits, then, love God according to the degree of knowledge they have of Him.[6]

In a later passage St. Bernard indicates clearly that love establishes a greater degree of communion with God than knowledge does: "You cannot love One whom you do not know, nor have eternal happiness in the possession of One whom you do not love . . . attain to the knowledge of Him, that you may love Him also. In the one is the beginning of wisdom, in the other is the consummation."[7]

This concern with precedence is at the heart of the difficulty of establishing the iconographic tradition, for the significance of the colors seems to have grown out of two considerations: the function of the angelic orders and their proximity to God. St. Bernard, as well as Dionysius and others, shows that the "inflamed" angels are burning with love, and that to love is the function of the seraphim; "they appear to be of one Spirit with Him, just as fire which enkindles air, and impresses upon it heat and colour like its own so that it is manifestly not merely ignited, but become fire."[8] Thus the seraphim are depicted as red. The cherubim, whose function is to know, are blue because "Blue ... expresses ... truth,"[9] the resultant of knowledge, and because their position in space (their proximity to God) coincides with the sphere of the fixed stars.

This spatial relationship grew out of that mediaeval mysticism which linked the nine heavenly spheres of the Ptolemaic system with the nine orders of angels. The seraphim were associated with the Primum Mobile, and the cherubim with the sphere of the fixed stars—stars fixed in the *blue* vault of the heavens. The germ of this relationship comes probably from Dionysius,[10] though Dante gives it its most extensive and clearest expression.[11] Thomas Heywood's *Hierarchie of*

[6] *Life and Works of St. Bernard*, ed. and trans. S. J. Eales (London, 1896), IV, 107-108.

[7] *Ibid.*, IV, 239.

[8] *Ibid.*, IV, 107.

[9] Mrs. Anna Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (Boston, 1866), I, 41.

[10] "Le mouvement perpétuel tout autour des secrets divins, la chaleur, la profondeur, l'ardeur bouillonnante d'une constante révolution qui ne connaît ni relâche ni déclinaison..." (p. 207). Surely the mere mention that the angelic hierarchy revolved at tremendous speed about the Godhead would suggest to other msytics a connection between the rings of angels and the rings of the Ptolemaic heavens. In *Par.*, XXVIII, 25-27, Dante explains that the speed of revolution of the smallest circle of angels (seraphim) is equivalent to that of the largest of the heavenly spheres (Primum Mobile).

[11] See especially *Par.*, XXVIII, 97-99, which specifically links the cherubim to the circle of the fixed stars, and *Par.*, XXVIII, 70-72, which links the seraphim to the Primum Mobile.

the Blessed Angells[12] transfers the convention to English literature:

> *The* Primum Mobile *doth first begin*
> *To chime unto the holy* Seraphim
> *The* Cherubim *doth make concordance euen*
> *With the eighth* Sphere, *namely, The* Starry Heauen.

If then in the iconography of the Middle Ages red distinguished the seraphim and blue the cherubim, why does Chaucer write of the summoner's "fyr-reed cherubynnes face"? The answer may be that Chaucer, on his Italian trip, seeing paintings or frescoes with red angels, or seeing illuminated manuscripts which used this iconography,[13] did not know the significance of the colors and assumed that any of the angelic orders may be depicted in red. A likelier answer, however, is that he came upon some work in which the iconography was corrupt. As early as the first half of the fifteenth century, in a striking miniature illustrating *La Vie de Jésus*, the Limbourg brothers and Jean Colombe represent in bright red the angel who expels Adam and Eve from Eden.[14] The Vulgate refers to this angel as a cherub (Genesis 3:24). The illustration is the earliest example of deviation from the iconographical tradition that I have found, but it cannot be the first. Earlier painters than the Limbourgs may have been led astray by St. Thomas Aquinas, who writes:

> Although in God the will [love] and the intellect are the same, still, inasmuch as love requires by its very nature that it proceed only from the conception of the intellect, there is a distinction of order between the procession of love and the procession of the Word [intellect] in God.[15]

Again, in an objection, he says: "Knowledge comes before love, and intellect is higher than will. Therefore the order of *Cherubim* seems to be higher than the *Seraphim*."[16] But he raises the objection only to reject it:

> Knowledge takes place according as the thing known is in the knower; but love, as the lover is united to the thing loved. Now higher things are in a nobler way in themselves than in lower things; whereas lower things are in higher things in a nobler way than they are in themselves. Therefore to know lower things is better than to love them; and to love the higher things, God above all, is better than to know them.[17]

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[12] London, 1635, p. 283.

[13] "The blue and red angels are frequently found in Parisian manuscripts of the fourteenth century school." P. A. Lemoisne, *Gothic Painting in France: 14th and 15th Centuries* (New York, 1931?), p. 76. On the other hand, in so fine a collection of English materials as *Treasures of Illumination: English Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1937), there is not one red or blue angel.

[14] Condé Museum, Chantilly.

[15] *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. A. C. Pegis (New York, 1945), I, 279.

[16] *Ibid.*, I, 1005.

[17] *Ibid.*, I, 1008.

St. Thomas applies this reasoning directly to the angelic orders with which we are concerned: "The *Cherubim* know the divine secrets supereminently. But the *Seraphim* excel in what is the supreme excellence of all, in being united to God Himself."[18] He agrees then with St. Bernard about the precedence of love over knowledge and with Dionysius about the precedence of seraph over cherub, but a careless reading of these demanding passages could easily have misled some painters.

It is more likely, however, that Chaucer was led into error through literary tradition rather than through that of the visual arts. Iconography was less important to a writer whose theme was secular, as Chaucer's was, than to a writer such as Heywood or Milton, whose theme was theological. The source for the confusion in the literary or philosophical tradition may be found *possibly* in a thirteenth-century Christian encyclopaedia, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*—which keeps the hierarchy of the angels correct[19] but permits the assumption that the cherubim emit the same fiery glow as the seraphim: "Aungels beþ i-peynt in many manere shappes wonderliche i-chaunged, as Denys toucheþ in fine Ierarchie . . . Þey beþ i cloþed in fury reed cloþis, for þey beþ i-wrapped in þe liȝt and mantil of þe knowing & loue of god" (30-35).[20] Though Bartholomaeus uses only the word *aungels*, he writes of those wrapped in knowledge and love, the attributes of the cherubim and the seraphim, respectively. John of Trevisa's translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* was published in 1398, too late for Chaucer; however, the Latin original was not. Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedia "was one of the most popular books of its time. In the thirteenth century . . . the Latin *De Proprietatibus Rerum* had supplanted all other compilations of knowledge."[21] Chaucer well may have relied upon this reference book of the Middle Ages.

Another possible source of confusion is the Book of Enoch, one of the many books of the Pseudepigrapha which received considerable attention in the Middle Ages, though even then uncanonical.

The Book of Enoch contains an incomplete but suggestive list of angelic orders. The hierarchy, where most formal, follows the precedence with which we are familiar: seraphim then cherubim. But in one verse (71:7) the cherubim precede the seraphim; and in another (14:11) the cherubim are red: "Its ceiling was like the path of the stars and the lightnings, and between them were fiery cherubim." The Book of Enoch is believed to be the work of various hands, dating

[18] *Ibid.*, I, 1006.

[19] "Bartholomaeus Anglicus, 'De Proprietatibus Rerum,' Englished by John de Trevisa," ed. R. W. Mitchner (Indiana University disseration, 1947), p. 34, lines 21-24; p. 40, lines 3-5.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

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from 200 B.C. to A.D. 100.[22] Thus it precedes even pseudo-Dionysius, who claimed to be a disciple of St. Paul but whom scholars refuse to date earlier than the fifth century A.D.[23] The influence of the Book of Enoch cannot at this distance be determined, but it is interesting to note that it is the only writing of scriptural or near-scriptural authority to associate red with the cherubim. It is the earliest work to rank angels at all and possibly had some influence on Dionysius himself.

Bartholomaeus is the earliest literary treatment of angel iconography that I have been able to find in English. His ambiguous statement provides an opportunity for the corruption of the tradition. Osbern Bokenham, however, increases the confusion in his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (ca. 1447). He avowedly translates from various works, and in a prologue to his "Life of St. Margaret" claims that its source is the *The Golden Legend*. But there is nothing in that work to supply the following:

> we may vndyrfonge
> That in sexe vertuhs she was stronge,
> As in chastyte, mekenesse, & suyngly
> In cheryte, in constaunce of suffrynge wronge,
> In goostly counfort and in vyctory.
> These sexe vertuhs be figuryd mystyly
> In the sexe wengys wych that Isaye
> Of the cherubyns in hys vysyoun sy . . .[24]

Not only is Bokenham adding freely to *The Golden Legend* but he is also misquoting Isaiah. In the only place—Isaiah 6:2—where the Bible provides the name that Dionysius later ranked first, Bokenham substitutes "cherubyns," giving to the second order of angelic intelligence the six wings that were a further iconographical identification of the seraphim in mediaeval and Renaissance painting.[25] Anyone writing later than Bokenham might have seen in the visual arts a six-winged creature colored red. On the authority of the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* he would have identified it as a cherub.

About 1570 Francis Thynne wrote *The Debate betweene Pride and Lowliness*. His description of a merchant has a familiar echo: "The other was by trade a Vintener . . . His face as redd as any cherubyn.[26] Thynne's *Animadversions uppon the Annotacions and Corrections of Some Imperfections of Impressions of Chaucers Works* (1598) es-

[22] *The Book of Enoch*, trans. R. H. Charles (Oxford, 1912), p. x.

[23] Dionysius, p. 16.

[24] Lines 316-323. Ed. M. S. Serjeantson (London, 1938), p. 9.

[25] See Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Vision of Santa Fina* (ca. 1470). This painting helps to establish the traditional iconography of the seraphim, for its angels have both the six wings and the red pigment. See also Isaiah 6:2: "Above . . . stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly."

[26] Ed. John Payne Collier (London, 1841), p. 30.

tablishes a close knowledge of *The Canterbury Tales*, and the elder Thynne's edition of Chaucer (1532) provides an association early enough to have influenced the son. The description is so close, both in imagery and cadence, to Chaucer's summoner that we need look no further than the *Canterbury Tales* for the source of Thynne's faulty iconography.

Spenser, with his usual independence, departs completely from the tradition:

> Yet farre more faire be those bright *Cherubins*,
> Which all with golden wings are overdight,
> And those eternall burning *Seraphins*,
> Which from their faces dart out fierie light;
> Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright
> Be th'*Angels* and *Archangels*, which attend
> On Gods owne person, without rest or end.[27]

Though his seraphim are represented according to the tradition of the visual arts, Spenser goes to Exodus 25:18-20, for golden-winged cherubim. The precedence he gives to angels and archangels seems to be without models.[28]

Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Part I makes a very charming and light use of the red angel's face. In the scene in which Falstaff is twitting Bardolph mercilessly on the redness of his face, the fat knight says:

> I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be 'By this fire, that's God's angel.'[29]

I have not read any commentator who explains the passage in terms of the iconographical convention. R. P. Cowl claims that the lines are a parody of a passage in Chapman's *Blind Beggar of Alexandria*: "Now by this pistol which is Gods angell."[30] I do not think that Shakespeare's line has any connection with Chapman's other than the use of what must have been a familiar oath.[31] Chapman is stating simply that a pistol is a

[27] "Hymne of Heavenly Beautie," lines 92-98, *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. E. Greenlaw et al. (Baltimore, 1943), I, 224-225.

[28] It is interesting to note that in the Variorum Lilian Winstanley is cited as giving the iconography correctly and adding that "Spenser only follows tradition when he pleases." I, 554.

[29] III, iii, 35-39. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Hardin Craig (New York, 1951), p. 695.

[30] *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, ed. John Johnson (Oxford, 1928), VI, 1044-1045.

[31] Cowl's belief that Shakespeare's line parodies Chapman's leads him to fix the earliest possible date of composition for *I Henry IV* as 1596, the year in which *The Blind Beggar* was produced. *Times Literary Supplement*, Mar. 26, 1925, p. 222. But Kittredge, *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth* (New York, 1940), p. 167, calls attention to *Misogonus*: "By this fier that bournez thats gods aungell I swear a great oth." *Early Plays from the Italian*, ed. R. W. Bond (Oxford, 1911), p. 231. The editor of *Misogonus* cannot date the play any later than 1577 (p. 171). It is difficult to see in what way exactly Shakespeare was

messenger of death. The identification of his angel ought to be with Azrael, whereas the whole point of Shakespeare's allusion is to indicate that Bardolph is so little given to virtue that he could never be mistaken as seraphic. The source of Shakespeare's oath must rest ultimately in the symbolism of the celestial hierarchy. Spenser alters tradition out of sheer vagary; Shakespeare uses tradition to obtain the poetic effect of hell-fires in conjunction with angelic fires.

By the end of the sixteenth century such a confusion or, if one prefers, such a tradition exists (at least among writers) that Cotgrave makes almost no distinction between the two highest angelic orders: "Cherubin: Rouge comme vn Cherubin. Red-faced, Cherubin-faced, having a fierie facies like a Cherubin. Seraphin: A Seraphin; a burning, or flame-coloured Angell."[32] There is something of a return to orthodoxy, however, in Heywood. The probable reason for his almost complete conventionality in the *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells* (1635) is that he went back to the philosophers whose writings suggested the original iconography. The following is a synthesis of the mediaeval Church writings on angelology:

> The *Seraphims*, for their vicinity
> To God, are full of Diuine purity;
> And such a fulgence through their Essence runnes,
> That they are brighter than ten thousand sunnes.
> (Page 273)

> So doth the *Cherubs* second order moue
> From the first *Seraph*, next to God in Loue.
> (Page 274)

Both the order and the color are correct. Heywood's primary purpose is to write a learned poem on the order and the function of the hierarchy. The section on the celestial intelligences is almost straight dialectic. Heywood does not subdue scholarship to poetry, and the poetry suffers.

But even Heywood disorders the firmament. He cites authority for promoting the cherubim: "God is an absolute *Monarch*; and next Him,/ Daniel doth place the holy Cherubim" (p. 283). I cannot find in Daniel any passage that can be so construed. Neither is there anything of the sort in *Susanna and the Elders* or *Bel and the Dragon*, which were printed in Bibles earlier than the King James version as part of the canonical book of Daniel. But Heywood makes the assertion once only, and does not elaborate upon it. A few lines later he reasserts the pri-

parodying the line from Chapman. That such an oath was common can be shown by reference to Dekker's *Satiromastix* (I, ii, 66), Dekker and Webster's *Northwest Hoe* (II, i, 183-184), and Dekker and Middleton's *The Honest Whore, Part I* (II, iv, 68-70). *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, 1953-55), I, 318; II, 430, 45.

[32] *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (1611), ed. W. S. Woods (Columbia, S.C., 1950).

macy of the seraphim. It is possible that he meant to write seraphim or that his printer made the error. The only other possibilities are that Heywood construed Daniel 10:5-6 in a way for which there was no justification[33] or that he was confused in his sources.

The attributes of the angels in the works of Milton are usually orthodox. Not only *Paradise Lost* but all of Milton's poems might be said to justify God's ways; Milton like Heywood is writing theological poems. "At A Solemn Music" arranges the "bright Seraphim in burning row" (line 10); and Book II of *Paradise Lost* describes Satan in "A Globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed" (line 512). But a seeming departure from traditional iconography is interesting:

> High in the midst exalted as a God
> Th'Apostate in his Sun-bright Chariot sat
> Idol of Majesty Divine, enclos'd
> With Flaming Cherubim ...
> (*P.L.*, VI, 99-102)

Here Milton purposely alters the conventional color of the cherubim to serve his poetic concept. For these are apostate angels, and the reddish hue presages them as "the companions of [Lucifer's] fall, o'erwhelm'd / With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire" (*P.L.*, I, 76-77).

Milton's return to iconographical correctness implies, unlike Heywood's dialectical rigidity, an acquaintance with the visual arts. Milton made trips to Italy and France, and spent better than a year abroad. He could have corrected impressions he received from Chaucer, Spenser, and the encyclopaedists with observation of the continental Renaissance painters. In Venice he could have seen the works of Carpaccio; probably no artist so late uses more of the color iconography for the celestial hierarchy than this Venetian. In Florence he could have seen the works of Fra Angelico, in Siena the works of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, both of whom observe the convention occasionally. In Paris he might have seen the illuminated manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries—many of them full of the red and blue angels, such as Fouquet's miniatures executed for the *Book of Hours* of Étienne Chevalier.[34] He might have seen the right panel of Fouquet's Melun

[33] "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass." Some Bible commentators suggest that the figure is Gabriel. The chapter heading reads that Daniel "is comforted by the angel." If this is the figure Heywood has in mind, there is nothing to justify his calling it a cherub. These verses may have been, however, the authority for the occasional blue-green (beryl) angels of paintings like Fra Angelico's *Coronation of the Virgin*.

[34] See especially *The Enthronement of the Virgin* and *The Coronation of the Virgin*.

diptych, *The Virgin and Child,* in which the employment of red and blue angels is perhaps the most outstanding feature of an altogether brilliant painting.[35] Apart from the works of Fouquet, French art well into the late fifteenth century exhibits a rigid adherence to a formal iconography that had by that time almost disappeared in Italy; the works of the Master of Moulins, of the Master of the *Grandes Heures de Rohan,* of the Limbourg brothers and Jean Colombe, of Enguerrand Quarton[36] would be eye-catching for a poet who had already written, probably in 1632 or 1633, "At A Solemn Music," in which seraphim and cherubim are ranked and the former aligned "in burning row."

After Milton the angel in English literature is never again so important unless it be in Blake, and Blake's iconography is his own. The theology and morality of *Paradise Lost* were anachronistic at their appearance. Restoration England might have been delighted with *putti* that had all the qualities of a Titian Cupid or with a David who,

> after Heaven's own heart,
> His vigorous warmth did variously impart
> To wives and slaves; and, wide as his command,
> Scatter'd his Maker's image thro' the land,

but it was not ready to admire the angels who, almost all the Christian philosophers had come to agree, had neither corporeality nor sex.

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[35] Royal Museum of Beaux Arts, Antwerp.
[36] See various modern books on French art of the fifteenth century.

JAN LUYKEN: A DUTCH METAPHYSICAL POET

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DESPITE individual differences, the English metaphysical poets, from Donne to Traherne, share qualities of technique and attitude which justify the continuing use of the term "metaphysical" to denote a distinct stylistic phenomenon. Although the poetry of Donne and Herbert, with its spare, conceptual language and its intellectual, tightly organized structure, differs significantly from the sensuous, ritualistic poetry of Crashaw or the loosely organized, often descriptive poetry of Vaughan, it is not difficult to compile a set of characteristics which distinguish all metaphysical poets. To varying degrees, the structure of their lyrics is logical; the organizing principle is a demonstration of relationships rather than a statement or description. Their tone tends to be dramatic; the syntax of conversation, whether direct or reported, takes the place of the formal syntax of praise, lament, or apostrophe characteristic of much other lyric poetry. Their diction is colloquial; the language of normal speech largely replaces any kind of specialized poetic diction.

There is a similar consistency in imagery and rhetoric. Metaphysical imagery, as critics from Dryden to T. S. Eliot have pointed out, is drawn from disparate areas of human experience; law, medicine, geography, alchemy, and formal logic supplement and largely supplant the heavenly bodies, precious stones, and assorted flora and fauna which constituted the acceptable image stock of the Renaissance poet. Furthermore, the imagery of the metaphysicals is strictly conceptual in its function, whether that imagery is intellectualized and deliberately unvisualized, as in Donne's poetry, or used for formal symbolic purposes, as in Crashaw. Marvell's quatrain in "The Definition of Love,"

> As lines so loves *oblique* may well
> Themselves in every angle greet;
> But ours so truly *paralel*,
> Though infinite can never meet,[1]

is rooted in an intellectual perception. But even the startling sense images in Crashaw's "The Weeper" have a related conceptual basis; the Magdalen's tears serve as angel's breakfast food not because of their intrinsic physical qualities but because they are a source of spiritual nourishment.

A typical dependence on irony and paradox also unites the meta-

[1] Andrew Marvell, *Poems*, ed. Hugh Macdonald (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 35.

physical poets, as do also such relevant figures as conceit (the figurative application of the all-embracing image stock of the metaphysicals), catachresis, and oxymoron (the figurative equivalents of paradox and irony).

The validity of the concept "metaphysical" as denoting a style may fairly be accepted. The position of this style in European literary history, however, presents some problems, the solution of which would be helpful both to the historian and to the critic who feels that a more extensive awareness of the metaphysical fashion is useful in reaching a sound reading of individual poems. Some modern scholars who have dealt with the problem regard metaphysical poetry as a local manifestation of general European baroque style; others see it as a unique stylistic phenomenon resulting from literary, philosophic, and religious developments in certain areas of seventeenth-century Europe.[2] Of the latter group, some hold metaphysical poetry to be a specifically English development while others attribute to it a wider scope.[3]

The approach of the comparatist may well cast light on this problem. The work done thus far from this approach suggests that metaphysical poetry constitutes a distinct style, unlike the continental baroque, and that this style is not limited to English poetry.[4] At present, an examination of continental literature to determine the existence and extent of something analogous to the poetry of the English metaphysicals seems desirable. No body of continental verse demonstrates more tellingly the presence of this analogous something than does the religious poetry of the seventeenth-century Dutchman Jan Luyken (1649-1712).

In its general outline, Luyken's milieu shows little similarity to that of the English metaphysicals. Donne, George Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Marvell, and Traherne were all members of well-to-do families of the upper middle class or of the small nobility. They were all university educated. Four of the six major metaphysicals were clergymen; all except the Roman Catholic convert Crashaw were Anglicans. Most of them moved in courtly circles. Luyken was born in Amsterdam, into a small bourgeois family of the Baptist faith. Trained as an etcher and engraver, he led a very uneventful life, the most significant episodes of which were his religious conversion, shortly after 1671, and his withdrawal, in 1682, from Amsterdam to the small

[2] For expressions of the first view, see M. Praz, *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (Florence, 1925); R. Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London, 1948). For the second, see G. Williamson, *The Donne Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930); O. de Mourgues, *Metaphysical, Baroque and Précieux Poetry* (Oxford. 1953).

[3] Williamson, for example, in his emphasis on the role of Donne in forming the style, implies its effective restriction to England (*op. cit.*, pp. 58-80).

[4] Such are the implications in De Mourgues, *op. cit.*

town of Hoorn on the Zuiderzee, where he spent the rest of his life.[5]

Luyken's poetry before the conversion shows few metaphysical traits. The *Duytse Lier* (Dutch Lyre) of 1671 is made up of amorous lyrics in the Italianate style which Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft had introduced into Holland in the late sixteenth century. The later volumes, the product of Luyken's conversion, present a remarkable development in style. Quite simply, Luyken has become a metaphysical poet. The following passage from "De Ziele omhelst het arme en lydende leven Jesu Christi" (The Soul Embraces the Poor and Suffering Life of Jesus Christ) suggests Donne and, more particularly, Herbert in the manner in which it places spiritual abstractions in a context of mundane hospitality:

O Welkom kruys en bitter lyden,
Verachting, oneer, spot, en smaet,
Verschovenheyt van alle zyden,
Vergeeten armoedt, strydt en haet,
Ghy moet aen myne tafel eeten,
En overnachten in myn huys.[6]

O welcome sufferings, welcome Cross,
Dishonor, curses, woe, and shame,
Rejection from all sides, and loss,
Poverty, strife and hate and pain;
You all may eat well at my table,
And spend the night within my house.

A second example suggests another "metaphysical" aspect of Luyken's metaphor, the conceptual basis on which it usually rests. The soul is compared to a drop of water, God to a glass of wine, not because of any intrinsic sensuous resemblance between tenor and vehicle but rather because of a functional similarity:

Gelijk een waterdrop, geplingt in rooden wyn,
Haer self soo gantsch verliest, aen smaeck aen reuck en verwe;
Soo louter moet den geest in Godt versmolten zyn,
En gantsch te gronde toe haer eygen wille sterven.
(Page 16)

Just as a waterdrop, plunged in the red, red wine,
At once is wholly lost in color, smell and taste;
Just so the Soul entire must melt in God divine,
And let the restless will to utter nothing waste.

[5] For Luyken's biography I am indebted to J. Te Winkel, *De Ontwikkelingsgang der Nederlandsche Letterkunde* (Haarlem, 1922-27), V, 44-51, and A. C. M. Meeuwesse, *Jan Luyken als Dichter van de Duytse Lier* (Groningen, 1952), pp. 1-42, as well as to C. B. Hylkema's introduction to Jan Luyken, *Stichtelijke Verzen*, ed. Hylkema (Zaandam, 1904), the edition from which most of my quotations are taken.

[6] Luyken, *op. cit.*, p. 20. The translations are mine.

In many typical emblem poems Luyken explores the symbolic implications of his emblems with an intellectual thoroughness and a consistent wit which are not always associated with that often tiresome genre. Thus, in "De Gouddraad trecker" (p. 39) the virtuous soul is drawn through the path of righteousness as a gold thread is drawn through a narrow eye, without losing any of its brightness in the process. Elsewhere, the body is seen as a shoe, the function of which is to enable the soul to stride toward the land of eternal peace (p. 38). Ingenuity and homely metaphor alike underline the poet's kinship to the English metaphysicals.

Luyken's emblems are consistently drawn from humble or universal areas of experience—the daily life of children (*Des Menschen Begin, Midden en Einde*, 1712), the occupations of mankind (*Het Menselyk Bedryf*, 1694), the times of day and types of weather (*Beschouwing der Wereld*, 1708). The diction of the poems, a mixture of abstraction and colloquialism, embodies the characteristic "metaphysical" fusion of disparate types of experience. "Het Molentje" (The Windmill) may stand as a final example of this phase of Luyken's work:

Indien het onderjaarig Kind
Wil dat zyn Molentje zal draaijen,
Zo loopt het lustig tegen wind,
En laat zyn kaakjes rood bewaaijen:
O Tegen wind, en tegen stroom,
Gy maakt de Oude kindren vroom.
(Page 107)

When the tender little child
Wants to set his windmill turning,
He runs against the wind so wild,
Until his cheeks are crimson burning:
O contrary wind, contrary streams,
Old children's piety from you comes.

The emblem, a symbolic picture with an explanatory text, is clearly related to metaphysical poetry. The visualization of a complex spiritual relationship in terms of a concrete image, the emblem itself, almost serves as a definition of the conceit, the characteristic metaphysical figure. But the fact remains that most true emblem poetry, unlike Luyken's, is only peripherally metaphysical.[7] In the work of Quarles, the English emblem poet par excellence, as in that of the Dutchman Jacob Cats, the emblem tends to invade the province of the poetry. In a

[7] I am in disagreement with Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (London, 1939), and Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility* (Baton Rouge, 1939), who maintain that a close connection exists between emblem and metaphysical poetry. See also the criticism of their position in J. A. Mazzeo, "A Critique of Some Modern Theories of Metaphysical Poetry," *MP*, L (1952-53), 88-96.

typical Quarles poem (Book I, Emblem XV)[8] we are presented with a picture of a grotesque scene: Fraud is applying a lash to the naked back of Astraea, while Sense clips the wings of Faith. Satan, complete with horns and tail, presides over the scene. The picture is so telling that the poem, apart from identifying the personifications, can only describe it. The poem therefore lacks both tension and any real function, metaphysical or otherwise.

When emblem poetry is metaphysical, as Luyken's clearly is, its metaphysical qualities are unrelated to the visual detail of the emblem itself. The emblems picturing human occupations in *Het Menselyk Bedryf* (executed by Luyken himself) are simply illustrations; we see the shoemaker, the sailmaker, the maker of gold thread, but the spiritual application and development are the business of the poem itself. And in carrying on this business the poem shows itself to be, in its own terms, metaphysical.

One may find in the poetry of Crashaw English examples of this use of the emblem as illustration rather than as static allegory. In his poem urging the Countess of Denbigh to embrace Catholicism,[9] one of the most clearly "metaphysical" products of this poet who stands in many ways near the edge of the metaphysical movement, we find an emblem—a heart with a padlock on it. But the imagery of the poem is not prescribed by the emblem. The poem's most "metaphysical" lines,

> So when the year takes cold, we see
> Poor waters their own prisoners be.
> Fetter'd, and lockt up fast they lie
> In a sad self-captivity,
> (Lines 21-24)

are figured nowhere in the emblem proper.

The metaphysical quality of Luyken's poetry, then, is not a product of his use of the emblem. And, as I have suggested earlier, his environment differed from that of the English metaphysicals enough to discourage any attempt to discover mutual social or economic bases. It is in the thematic concerns of Luyken's work that we find a possible common source for the metaphysical style. Predominantly, Luyken is obsessed by the desire to lose himself in the divine unity which he perceives beneath the multiple realities of earthly experience. The figure of the soul losing itself in God as a waterdrop loses itself in wine, quoted above, illuminates the study of Luyken, for its meaning underlies most of his poetry. In particular, we find this theme dominating his best poetry—the volumes entitled *Jesus en de Ziel* (Jesus and the Soul) and *Voncken der Liefde Jesu* (Sparks of the Love of Jesus), both published in 1687.

[8] R. C. Brinkley, ed., *English Poetry of the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1942), pp. 227-229.

[9] Richard Crashaw, *Verse in English* (New York, 1949), p. 146.

In these volumes the poet is concerned not with public edification, as in the emblem books, but with the lyric expression of a personal religious experience. Here, where Luyken reaches greatness, his style is most fully metaphysical:

Ick meenden oock de Godtheyt woonde verre,
In eenen troon hoog boven maen en sterre,
  En heften menighmael myn oogh,
  Met diep versuchten naer om hoogh;
Maer toen ghy u beliefden te openbaren,
Toen sagh ick niets van boven neder varen;
  Maer in den grond van myn gemoet,
  Daer wierd het lieflyck ende soet.
Daer quamt ghy uyt der diepten uytwaerts dringen.
En, als een bron, myn dorstigh hart bespringen,
  Soo dat ick u, O Godt! bevondt,
  Te zyn den grondt van mynen grondt.
Dies ben ik blij, dat Gij, mijn hoogbeminde,
Mij nader zijt dan al mijn naaste vrinden!
  Was nu alle ongelykheyt voort,
  En 't herte reyn gelyck het hoort,
Geen hooghte, noch geen diepte sou ons scheyden,
Ick smolt in Godt, myn Lief: wij werden beiden
  Een geest, een hemels vlees en bloed,
  De wezenheid van Gods gemoed.
Dat moet geschien. Och help getrouwe Heere,
Dat wy ons gansch in uwen wille keeren.[10]

I thought that Godhead made its home afar,
Enthroned beyond the moon and every star,
  And often lifted up my eyes
  Thither with deep and heartfelt sighs;
But when it pleased Thee to illuminate me,
I saw no heavenly light descend to greet me;
  But at my spirit's deepest root
  All was lovely, all was sweet.
For Thou cam'st from the depths and outwards spread,
And like a well my thirsty heart was fed;
  So was it, God, that Thee I found
  To be the ground beneath my ground.
Then I rejoiced that Thou, my highest dearest,
Wert closer to me than my earthly nearest!
  All disproportion fled from me,
  My heart was pure, as it should be.
No heights, no depths, shall separate us twain;
I melt in God, my Love; we shall remain
  One soul, one heavenly flesh and blood,
  The being and the mind of God.
It must occur; O help, eternal Lord,
To turn us to Thy will and to Thy word.

[10] Luyken, *op. cit.*, p. 12. In this edition the poem is incomplete. I have supplied the missing lines (13-14, 18-20) from a recent anthology. *Het Goud der Gouden Eeuw*, ed. A. van Duinkerken (Utrecht, n.d.), where the spelling is modernized.

In this poem the generic "metaphysical" qualities are reinforced by a particular affinity with the poetry of Henry Vaughan, another poet who found the footsteps of God in nature and longed to become a part of the divine unity.[11] But earlier metaphysicals than Vaughan had made a passionate monism their central theme. The consistency of Donne's creation lies in its thematic unity; whether addressing his mistress or his God, Donne longs for the experience that will cancel his painful individuality and unite him with infinity. From the tense interplay of the believed One and the perceived Many proceed those ironies, paradoxes, and discords which constitute the metaphysical style.[12]

Similarly, Herbert's work in some ways resolves itself to a dramatic account of one soul's laborious progress toward union with God; and Crashaw's central emphasis on "dying" and "melting" suggests, in both its doctrinal denotation and its sexual connotation, the same major theme.

Luyken, Vaughan, and Traherne—like Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw—explore the central paradoxes of the human experience in terms of the One and the Many; but, while the earlier poets had expressed themselves in a figuration based on traditional astronomy, cosmology, logic, and physics, the later metaphysicals lean heavily on observed nature, read as a set of meaningful hieroglyphics.[13] This shift in source of imagery, related to a shift in structure from the strictly argumentative to the partially descriptive, is the major historical development within the metaphysical movement, and divides that movement into earlier and later phases. The cause of the shift, I suspect, is to be found in the changing intellectual climate of seventeenth-century Europe. For Donne and Herbert the traditional world view—Aristotelian, Ptolemaic, Galenic—is still tenable, although the challenge of the "new philosophy" lends still another source of tension and wit to these poets.[14] But by the time Luyken, Vaughan, and Traherne are writing, the new philosophy

[11] See "The World," "The Night," Henry Vaughan, *Works*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford, 1914), II, 466-467, 522-523.

[12] James Smith, "On Metaphysical Poetry," *Scrutiny*, II (Dec. 1933), 228: "verse properly called metaphysical is that to which the impulse is given by an overwhelming concern with metaphysical problems; with problems either deriving from, or closely resembling in the nature of their difficulty, the problem of the Many and the One."

[13] See, for example, Vaughan's "Vanity of Spirit," *op. cit.*, II, 418-419.

[14] D. Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1945), pp. 37-38: "Ultimately it [the mediaeval allegorical instinct] springs from the religious belief in the divine unity of all things physical and spiritual, and it works through both intuition and the formal logic in which all men were trained. But in the seventeenth century that belief operates in an enlarged terrestrial and celestial world, against a developing background of philosophic scepticism, so that the allegorical mode of thought and feeling now appears less instinctive and normal, more eccentric and 'quaint,' than it did when its basic assumptions were universal and unquestioned . . . The result is 'metaphysical' poetry and prose."

has triumphed, and the older view—which had been such a comforting system for the monist—has become merely quaint.

The later metaphysicals thus are driven to two expedients for the maintenance of their vision. One is esoteric, "magical" lore; the other is the mystical apprehension of observed nature. Usually the two interact, as with Vaughan's hermeticism and Neo-Platonism, and the erudition becomes a means of interpreting nature. For Luyken, the great instrument of vision is the mystical nature philosophy of Jacob Boehme (who, significantly, was also an influence on Vaughan),[15] and Boehme's view of nature underlies such a poem as "De Ziel betracht den Schepper uyt de Schepselen" (The Soul Contemplates the Creator in the Creation):

Ick sach de schoonheyt, en de soetheid aller dingen,
  En spraeck: wat syt gy schoon! Toen hoorden myn gemoet:
Dat zyn wy oock; maer hy van wien wy 't al ontfingen,
  Is duysentmael so schoon, en duysentmael so soet;
En dat zyt gy, myn Lief, soud ik u niet begeeren!
  Is hier een Lely-bladt, op aerd, so blanck en fyn!
Wat moet, O eeuwig Goet, O aller dingen Heere,
  Wat moet de witheyt van uw suyverheyt dan zyn;
Is 't Purper ook so schoon der Rosen, die hier bloeyen,
  Bedaut met Peerlen, als de Morgen-son haer groet;
Hoe moet het Purper van uw Majesteyt dan gloeyen!
  Ruyckt hier een Violet so lieflyk en so soet;
Als 't Weste windjen door de Hoven sacht gaet weyden,
  So ick het menigmaal by koelen morgen vond,
Wat moet sich dan een reuk door 't Paradys verspreiden,
  So lieflyk vloeyende uyt uw vrindelyken mondt!
Is hier de Son, gelyk een Bruydegom geresen,
  So schoon, en blinckende op het hoogste van den dag?
Wat moet uw aengesicht dan claer en helder wesen!
  O God! myn schoonste Lief, dat ik uw eenmael sag!
(Page 1)

I saw the beauty and the sweetness of all things,
  And said: "How fair you are!" Then heard an answer clear:
"Indeed we are, but He from whom our beauty springs
  Is a thousand times more sweet, a thousand times more fair."
And that Thou art, my Dearest, the goal of my desire!
  If a lily here on earth is fair, and white, and clean,
What must, eternal Good, Lord of all things and higher,
  What must the whiteness be of Thy purity serene?
So lovely is the scarlet of the roses here below,
  Glistening with pearls as the morning sun doth greet them,
How must the scarlet of Thy majesty then glow!
  If violets smell sweet each time we bend to meet them,

[15] E. Holmes, *Henry Vaughan and the Hermetic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 23-25. For some account of Boehme's influence on Luyken, see Meeuwesse, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-195.

As the little western wind blows softly through the field
(I've marked it many times in the mornings fresh and cool),
What then the sweetness that Thy kindly mouth must yield,
What blessed odours sweet through Paradise must roll.
If here the Sun appears, a bridegroom richly dressed,
So fairly shining down on the beauties of the day,
What must Thy countenance be, so beautiful and blest!
O God, my dearest Love, I would see Thee without stay!

Boehme's view of nature underlines also "De Ziele in aendacht over de nieuwe Creatuer" (The Soul's Devotion at the Rebirth of Life), so reminiscent of Vaughan's "I walked the other day to spend my hour":

Toen 't Saatjen sturf in 's aertryx schoot,
En scheen vergeten en verlooren,
Toen groenden 't Bloempje door dien doot,
En quam gelyck een nieu gebooren,
Uyt duystere aerde in 't schoone licht,
Om reuck en verwen voor te dragen.
Begroet van 's hemels aengesicht,
Met daum en sonneschyn in 't dagen;
Soo wast de nieuwe creatuur,
Als eygen wil gaet in 't verderven,
In doodt en graf, al smaeckt het suur,
Daer groent een leven door dat sterven...
O JESU lief! O eeuwigh goedt!
Hoe vurrigh lust het my te worden
Een Bloempjen aen uw Rosenhoedt,
Daer nooit een lovertje verdorden!
O Herre Jesu voert my aen,
Om altyd in den doodt te gaen.
(Page 10)

When the seedlet died in the lap of earth,
And seemed forgotten and forlorn,
The flower came to green rebirth,
From death to life as newly born.
From gloomy earth to the lovely light,
To give its hue and scent to all,
With heaven's face to greet its sight,
While dew and sunshine on it fall.
So grows the new and lovely creature,
Then goes to death of its own will,
To death and the grave; the taste is bitter,
But its dying yields a green life still...
O dearest Jesus! Eternal Good!
How ardently I long to be
A flower on your rose-decked head,
Where never withering may be!
My Lord, my Jesus, make me strive
To long for death while yet alive.

Thus, the poetry of Luyken, like that of Vaughan, is strongly metaphysical, in both technique and central theme. But it belongs to that last

phase of metaphysical poetry, in which the traditional view of the world expresses itself through a meditative attention to observed nature, an attention which in many ways anticipates that of those romantics who a century and a half later were also to look for the Creator in the creation.[16]

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[16] The theory of metaphysical poetry which I express in the latter half of this study is in substantial agreement with that of James Smith, *op. cit.* This ultimately philosophical explanation is, I believe, supported rather than modified by two additional theories which seem to have considerable validity: Mazzeo's relation of the movement to a seventeenth-century "poetic of correspondences" ("Metaphysical Poetry and the Poetic of Correspondences," *JHI*, XIV, 1953, 221-234), which, after all, "reveal[s] the unity of what appears fragmentary" (Mazzeo, "A Critique," *MP*, L, 93); and Martz's observation of its connection with the practice of formal meditation (L. L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation*, New Haven, 1954).

PATER AND APULEIUS

EUGENE J. BRZENK

ONE OF the most memorable passages in the writings of Walter Pater, his celebrated retelling in *Marius the Epicurean* of Apuleius' story of Cupid and Psyche, has been frequently dismissed, perhaps because of its memorability, as just another purple patch. Yet by devoting the fifth chapter of his novel to an extended translation, Pater revealed a broad conception of the kind of materials that could be incorporated into a work of fiction and illustrated some of his own theories of language and style. He also demonstrated how an author's "sense of fact," "his peculiar intuition of a world,"[1] can pervade even the translation of an early Greek story; for his version has many qualities quite distinct from the Latin original as well as from the famous rendering of 1566 by William Adlington.[2]

Pater early became interested in translation as a writing discipline when he was acquiring a literary style of his own; his biographers describe the daily exercises he set for himself in translation from Greek, Latin, and French authors, especially Flaubert and Sainte-Beuve. Apuleius' euphuistic work with its

> archaisms and curious felicities in which that generation delighted, quaint terms and images picked fresh from the early dramatists, the life-like phrases of some lost poet preserved by an old grammarian, racy morsels of the vernacular and studied prettinesses . . .[3]

became for him, as it did for Marius, "The Golden Book," rich in suggestion for a lover of words for their own sake.

While discussing Flaubert's "exact apprehension of what was needed to carry the meaning," Pater declared in his essay on "Style" that "inspired translation" reveals a similar happy agreement of thought and word, although earlier he had observed that

> translators have not invariably seen how all-important that [the right vocabulary] is in the work of translation, driving for the most part at idiom or construction; whereas, if the original be first-rate, one's first care should be with its elementary particles, Plato, for instance, being often reproducible by an exact following, with no variation in structure, of word after word, as the pencil follows a drawing under tracing-paper . . .[4]

Yet the most distinctive feature of Pater's rendering of Apuleius is his trimming of the rambling of the original story into a version which

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[1] Walter Pater, "Style," *Appreciations* (London, 1901), p. 8.

[2] *The Golden Ass*, Being the *Metamorphoses* of Lucius Apuleius with an English translation by W. Adlington, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1935).

[3] Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean* (London, 1900), I, 59.

[4] *Appreciations*, pp. 14-15.

is approximately one-third shorter. Adlington took some small liberties within the sentences themselves, adding, deleting, or substituting words and phrases to convey Apuleius' meanings, but he did not cut out any of the narrative and descriptive materials found in the original. Pater, on the other hand, omitted a large number of passages which Adlington translated verbatim. Actually, Pater's shortened version presents a highly personal conception of Apuleius' picaresque work. The greatest part of *The Golden Ass* is devoted to the misadventures of Lucius, accidentally metamorphosed into an ass, a predicament thoroughly exploited for all possible effects of grossness and ribaldry, and most of the tales told by subsidiary characters are in the nature of *facetiae*. While Pater acknowledged that Apuleius showed "not a little obvious coarseness," he chose to translate the one tale which attracted him by its "lovely, visible imagery."

Examination of Pater's excisions reveals a consistent purpose guiding his selection or rejection of materials. For example, he left out entirely the complaints of Psyche's jealous sisters which Adlington had translated as follows:

> "But I, poor wretch, have first married a husband older than my father, more bald than a coot, more weak than a child, and one that locketh up all the house with bolts and chains."
>
> Then said the other sister: "And in faith I am married to a husband that hath the gout, bent crooked, not courageous in paying the debt of love; I am fain to rub and mollify his crabbed hands with stinking plasters and rank-smelling salves and with the corruption of filthy clouts, so that he uses me not like a wife, but more like a surgeon's servant girl..."[5]

Here Adlington gives a faithful rendering of Apuleius' "dein cucurbita calviorem" (lit., "balder than a pumpkin") and "rarissimo Venerem meam recolentem sustineo, plerumque detortos et duratos in lapidem digitos eius perfricans." These remarks are typical of other speeches by the sisters which Pater excluded, and the reason for these omissions is readily found. The sisters are long-winded caricatures in the original, and Pater seems to have felt that their remarks destroyed the overall effect of elevated charm which properly belonged to the story.

He also reduced to three lines an exchange of dialogue between Venus and the gull which informed her of Cupid's love. Speeches like the following were cut completely:

> "Thy son," quoth she, "doth nothing but haunt harlots in the mountain, and thou thyself dost use to riot on the sea, whereby they say there is now nothing any more gracious, nothing pleasant, nothing gentle, but all is become uncivil, monstrous, and horrible; moreover, there are no more loving marriages, nor friendships of amity, nor loving of children, but all is disorderly, and there is a very bitter hatred of weddings as base things."[6]

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[5] Adlington, pp. 212-215.
[6] Adlington, pp. 240-241.

Pater also omitted Venus's indignant reply and her angry questioning of the gull, and further shortened his version by having Venus guess immediately at the identity of Cupid's beloved instead of having her run through the list of eligible Nymphs, Seasons, Muses, and Graces as did Apuleius and Adlington. Both Apuleius and Adlington picture Venus as a woman of the world with a ready tongue; their goddess is a modish theatergoer, returns in a tipsy condition from a wedding banquet, and complains against her rival in beauty using language that is far from Olympian. At one point she tears Psyche's clothes and hair and dashes the girl's head on the ground; in another passage she has her handmaidens, Sorrow and Sadness, scourge Psyche with whips, and in an insulting harangue calls the girl a harlot and her child a bastard. All these details of characterization, amusing though they may be in the original, detracted for Pater from the ideal quality which he perceived in the central love story.

As Apuleius told the story, Psyche tricked her wicked sisters to their deaths, but Pater omitted this detail of the plot completely, and the sisters in his version pass out of the story once they have accomplished the temptation of Psyche. He also left out such incidental bits of humor as the comment on Apollo's answering in Latin verse although he was a Greek god, Jupiter's comic catalogue of wrongs inflicted upon him by Cupid, and the information that those gods who failed to appear in council were fined ten thousand pounds (decem milius nummum). In describing Venus' progress on the sea, Pater included the names of Portunus and Salacia as attendants without the incongruous details, "Portunus caerulis barbis hispidus, et gravis piccoso sinu Salacia," which Adlington rendered: "Portunus with his bristled and rough beard of azure, Salacia with her bosom full of fish."

Most of these emendations are directed toward the exclusion of unseemly touches of comedy and distracting naturalism, especially the bits of humor at the expense of the gods which mar the overall effect Pater desired. This minimizing of naturalism occasionally led Pater into language that is perhaps overrefined. The hardest term of abuse he allowed Venus is "thou naughty maid"; and, where Adlington translated "hic adhuc infantilis nobis infantem alium" as "Thou hast a young and tender child couched in this young and tender belly of thine," Pater translates euphemistically, "Even now this bosom grows with a child to be born to us." By omitting phrases like "cucurbita calviorem," "vino madens," "verbis quoque insuper stimulat," and "conscensis navibus abeunt," which Adlington translated with characteristic verve as "balder than a coot," "well-tippled," "she egged him forward," and "they took shipping," Pater showed a greater preference for the "studied prettinesses" of the original than for the "racy morsels of the vernacular."

On the other hand, he reproduced with great fidelity the Apuleian passages describing the palace of Cupid, Venus riding the waves, and her trip to Olympus in a chariot drawn by doves. Yet, even in these instances, his translation is freer than Adlington's. The Elizabethan version often has the sound of a translation in its close following of the Latin constructions; Pater trimmed the excesses of the original and thereby intensified the most striking sensuous details. When translating the flight of Venus in her dove-drawn chariot, for example, Pater cut out just one detail, a reference to the gems set in the yoke, yet his description has a compactness and simplicity which is lacking both in the original and in Adlington's versions:

At Venus terrenis remediis inquisitionis abnuens caelum petit. Jubet instrui currum, quem ei Vulcanus aurifex subtili fabrica studiose poliverat et ante thalami rudimentum nuptiale numus obtulerat, limae tenuantis detrimento conspicuum et ipsius auri damno pretiosum. De multis quae circa cubiculum dominae stabulant, procedunt quatuor candidae columbae, et hilaris incessibus picta colla torquentes iugum gemmeum subeunt susceptaque domina laetae subvolant.

But Venus, after that she was weary with searching over all the earth for Psyche, returned towards heaven and commanded that one should prepare the chariot which her husband Vulcanus had most curiously shaped and given unto her as a marriage gift before that she had first entered the bridal chamber; and it was so finely wrought that it had been made the more precious even of the very gold which the file had taken away. Four white doves out of all those that stood sentinel to the chamber of their lady, stepped very briskly in front and bowed their rainbow-coloured necks to the yoke of precious gems, and when Venus was entered in, bore up the chariot with great diligence.[7]

Pater concentrated this into three crisp sentences:

And Venus, renouncing all earthly aid in her search, prepared to return to heaven. She ordered the chariot to be made ready, wrought for her by Vulcan as a marriage gift, with a cunning of hand which had left his work so much the richer by the weight of gold it lost under his tool. From the multitude which housed about the bedchamber of their mistress, white doves came forth, and with joyful motions, bent their painted necks beneath the yoke.[8]

Descriptive passages in Apuleius generally tend to be overwrought and diffuse, and this quality is reflected in the Adlington translation. For example, the overloaded description of the palace where Psyche is received on her wedding night:

Enimvero pavimenta ipsa lapide pretioso caesim deminuto in varia picturae genera discriminantur : vehementer ite-

The pavement was all of precious stone, divided and cut one from another, whereon was carved divers kinds of

[7] Adlington, pp. 256-259.
[8] *Marius the Epicurean*, I, 84.

rum ac saepius beatos illos qui super gemmas et monilia calcant! Iam ceterae partes longe lateque dispositae domus sine pretio pretiosae totique parietes solidati massis aureis splendore proprio coruscant, ut diem suum sibi domus faciat licet sole nolente; sic cubicula, sic porticus, sic ipsae valvae fulgurant. Nec setius opes ceterae maiestati domus respondent, ut equidem illud recte videatur ad conversationem humanam magno Iovi fabricatum caeleste palatium.

pictures, in such sort that blessed and thrice blessed were they which might go upon such a pavement of gems and ornaments; every part and angle of the house was so well adorned by the precious stones and inestimable treasure there, and the walls were so solidly built up with great blocks of gold, that glittered and shone in such sort that the chambers, porches, and doors gave out the light of day as it had been the sun. Neither otherwise did the other treasure of the house disagree unto so great a majesty, that verily it seemed in every point a heavenly palace fabricated and builded for Jupiter himself wherein to dwell among men.[9]

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Pater omitted the emphasis upon the massiveness of gold which Apuleius had used to drive home the costliness of the structure; his translation suggests instead an impression of lightness:

The very pavement was distinct with pictures in goodly stones. In the glow of its precious metal, the house is its own daylight, having no need of the sun. Well might it seem a place fashioned for the conversation of gods with men.[10]

Here and in other alterations, Pater provides an excellent illustration of what he means by his statement in the essay on "Style" that "the true artist may be best recognized by his tact of omission." Pater's changes in his translation of the Cupid and Psyche story are almost wholly the omission of elements which do not contribute to a unified effect; his labor of the file is directed toward preserving only those elements which contribute to his conception of the story as a picture of a perfect imaginative love.

This avoidance of overdecoration in language and detail reflects another of Pater's literary principles:

ascêsis, that frugal closeness of style which makes the most of a word, in the exaction from every sentence of a precise relief, in the just spacing out of word to thought, in the logically filled space connected always with the delightful sense of difficulty overcome.[11]

In translating Apuleius, Pater was guided by his own "sense of fact" in the selection of language and subject matter to furnish the sense of the remoteness of an ideal world which he sought to create. His "tact of omission," in fact, brought out the allegorical meaning he perceived in the central love story, the unity of tone giving new significance to those portions retained. By paring down Apuleius' excesses, Pater restored

[9] Adlington, pp. 200-203.
[10] *Marius the Epicurean*, I, 69.
[11] *Appreciations*, p. 17.

a simple classic quality to a discursive and embroidered version of a Greek myth.

As the opening sentence of the chapter on "Euphuism" in *Marius* explained, "So the famous story composed itself in the memory of Marius, with an expression changed in some ways from the original and on the whole graver."[12] So Pater-Marius tacitly acknowledged that his version of "The Golden Book" was a new creation, an "inspired translation" reflecting the coloring of his own temperament.

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[12] *Marius the Epicurean*, I, 95.

BOOK REVIEWS

ONE HUNDRED POEMS FROM THE CHINESE. By Kenneth Rexroth. New York: New Directions, n.d. xiv, 160 p.

Translations of Chinese poetry are always welcome and when a prominent poet undertakes the task, the result invites closest attention. Mr. Rexroth is a poet who shows in his own work an unusual sympathy to the Chinese poet's technique of using the precise images of daily experience for their extended universal significance, of concentrating fixedly on the opaque fabric of life's ordinary happenings until behind it the landscape of the human spirit which it has curtained begins to be discerned.

Mr. Rexroth's translations include thirty-five poems by Tu Fu, China's preeminent poet, and seventy-nine poems by eight major poets of China's most sophisticated period, the Sung. One regrets the absence of Wang An-shih, Huang T'ing-chien, and Fan Ch'eng-ta, and questions the inclusion of Chu Hsi. The translations are followed by a section of notes, providing an essay on Tu Fu, brief biographies of the poets anthologized, and explanatory material on the poems. A selected bibliography with critical remarks on other volumes of translated Chinese poetry completes the book.

Any volume of translated poetry raises the perennial problem: Which is the more important, a version which gives accurately the various levels of meaning of the original or one which produces an effective and successful poem in the new language—in other words, reliability or readability? In his introduction, Mr. Rexroth invites comment on the question whether his versions are "true to the spirit of the originals" and are "valid English poems."

For the effectiveness of his translations and their readability as self-sufficient English poems, one can have only the highest admiration. They lack the stilted fustian, the seeming non sequiturs, langorous exoticisms, and weary clichés which are too often the hallmark of translations from the Chinese. Mr. Rexroth has made no attempt to reproduce the formal prosody of Chinese verse; he has dispensed with rhyme, regular meter, and fixed line length and has employed parallelism between lines sparingly enough to avoid the rigid monotony which this device gives to English verse. At times the use of enjambement seems to have been carried even to excess, when line division divorces the adjective from its noun or a preposition from its object, as in

> "My neighbor's willow sways its frail
> Branches, graceful as a girl of
> Fifteen. I am sad because this
> Morning the violent
> Wind broke its longest bough."

The sharper focus placed on the substantive at the beginning of a line is more than offset by the undue and annoying stress given to particles at the end of the previous line. Nevertheless, the general effect of these English versions is one of clarity and simplicity, with even some of the conciseness of the original. The surface of factual statement is never overweighted with too great a burden of implication. Yet, for those who have worked to any extent with Chinese poetry, such lucidity is cause for uneasiness. It is just when a poem appears to be so transparent that one should suspect that additional, and valid, levels of meaning are overlooked.

However readable Mr. Rexroth's translations may be—and this is no small achievement—their reliability as restatements of the poet's ideas is more questionable. Although he disarms criticism by denying any value for his work as Oriental scholarship and by frankly admitting that he considers his translations as expressions of himself, ten pages of notes designed to clarify the poems as expressions of the Chinese poet's self and the admission that the translations represent the work of years (in the case of Tu Fu, of a lifetime), must condition our acceptance of Mr. Rexroth's modest disclaimer that these are "just some poems."

Fidelity to the spirit of the original poems requires first of all constant attention to the original text and secondly a highly critical use of existing translations. It is no disgrace to capitalize on the work of others. One would be foolish to ignore such valuable aid, but older translations must be evaluated for their reliability and controlled by reference to the Chinese text.

For his Tu Fu poems, Mr. Rexroth has depended mainly on the work of William Hung,[1] Florence Ayscough,[2] and von Zach,[3] with, as a control, the Chinese text to be found in *A Concordance to the Poems of Tu Fu*.[4] With such sources, the accuracy of this group of translations is superior to the rest. Yet a random check shows a number of instances where the translator, abandoning his predecessors and ignoring or misreading the original text, has missed a crucial point in the poem. The poignancy of "Moon Festival" (p. 8), in which the poet grieves over his war-torn country, is entirely lost in the tepid ending:

> "The moonlight
> Means nothing to the soldiers
> Camped in the western deserts."

The meaning is actually the opposite: "Do not shine on our camps in the west (lest our soldiers yearn for their homes)." The conclusion to "Full Moon" (p. 32) is not the impressionistic collection of unrelated natural phenomena:

> "Pine cones drop in the old garden.
> The senna trees bloom.
> The same clear glory extends for ten thousand miles,"

but a strong expression of specific nostalgia which should read

> "The pine and cassia trees still flourish in my garden at home,
> And though they are countless miles away,
> They, too, share the clear radiance (of this moon.)"[5]

These are serious misreadings of two uncomplicated poems and surprising in view of the fact that guides so generally reliable as Dr. Hung and von Zach offer correct readings. The seriousness lies not in the mistranslation of minor details but in the misunderstanding of the intent of a poem by misreading its central statement or failing to grasp the relationship of its ideas.

The Sung materials, which are especially welcome when one considers the dearth of translations from the literature of this period, are unfortunately even

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[1] William Hung, *Tu Fu, China's Greatest Poet* (Cambridge, 1952).

[2] Florence Ayscough, *Tu Fu: The Autobiography of a Chinese Poet*, Vol. I (Boston, 1929); *Travels of a Chinese Poet: Tu Fu, Guest of Rivers and Lakes*, Vol. II (Boston, 1934).

[3] Erwin von Zach, *Tu Fu's Gedichte*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1952).

[4] *A Concordance to the Poems of Tu Fu* [= Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement No. 14], Vol. II.

[5] *A Concordance to the Poems of Tu Fu*, II, 497, No. 38, lines 7-8.

more prone to error of fact as well as of complete intent. I have checked against the original text only some dozen of the poems of this section, but I trust that this limited basis for generalization is not unjust. Mr. Rexroth has been misled primarily by his sources, G. Margouliès, *Anthologie raisonnée de la littérature chinoise* (Paris, 1948), and, to an even greater extent, George Soulié de Morant, *Florilège des poèmes Song* (Paris, 1923), where thirty-three of these Sung poems are translated. Despite Mr. Rexroth's evaluation of these two collections in his bibliography as excellent, they are scarcely accurate as translations, however admirable as French poetry,[6] and Mr. Rexroth has for the most part duplicated the misunderstandings and elisions of the French translator, while adding others of his own.

For example, in Lu Yu's "I Get up at Dawn" (p. 123), Mr. Rexroth has been led astray by Soulié de Morant's translation:

> "Je revois, à travers des siècles sans nombre Choun et Yu,
> Et Krwé-long luttant contre sa propre race."[7]

Soulié de Morant's footnotes to the proper names indicate that the Emperors Shun and Yü the Great (founder of the Hsia dynasty) are involved, whereas the Chinese text indicates T'ang and Yü (Yao and Shun), exemplars of the Golden Age in which Yü of the Hsia had no function except as a terminal point. Krwé-long is identified as "un des neuf ministres de Choun (vingt-troisième siècle avant Jésus-Christ). Querelleur, avare et glouton, il avait le surnom de 'Grand Porc.'" Reference to the *Shu ching*[8] reveals that K'uei and Lung were two ministers of Shun, the one regulating music, the other communications, and that both were exemplary officers of the sage-emperor. I suspect the translator has confused these names with T'ao-t'ieh, a glutton who was banished by Shun. In any case, Mr. Rexroth has reproduced the confusion of names and improved on his model by making Kue Lung "that famous rowdy."

In pointing out such errors, I do not wish to make a display of erudition (the corrections above can all be made from basic reference works in English) nor indulge a scholastic fastidiousness. The errors noted are more than mere mistaken details; they radically alter what the poem is actually saying and misrepresent its intent. Lu Yu, seeing his aging face in the mirror by the light of dawn, reflects on the years that lie ahead (not "the years that are gone like spilt water"—Rexroth). Refusing the easy consolation of wine (not "I take a cup of wine"), he turns to his books and rereads the records of the enlightened era of sage-kings and their model ministers. At this point Soulié de Morant and Rexroth, hurdling several literary allusions, and skirting five compact lines of conclusion, end up off course with a couplet incongruous with the rest of the poem and insipid in itself. The end of the poem in Mr. Rexroth's translation reads:

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[6] It is difficult to determine the criteria for the critical comments in Mr. Rexroth's bibliography. Readability in the language of translation is evidently the chief basis of evaluation, to judge from the high praise given to the work of Judith Gautier, for some time acknowledged to be pseudo translations, and to the work of Soulié de Morant, Cranmer-Byng, and the recent volume of Lily Pao-hu Chang and Marjorie Sinclair, which on the basis of fidelity to the originals do not deserve such praise. Yet, if translations which are valid poems in the new language and which are expressions of the translator's personality are the chief criterion, one is puzzled by the critical remark on Pound's *The Classic Anthology*: "The less said the better."

[7] Soulié de Morant, *Florilège*, p. 157.

[8] James Legge, *The Shu King* (Oxford, 1899) [= The Sacred Books of the East, Vol. III], pp. 44-45, 61.

"Back through the centuries I
Visit Shun and Yu the Great
And Kue Lung, that famous rowdy.
Across three thousand years I
Can still see them plainly.
What does it matter? My flesh,
Like theirs, wears away with time."

To a person of Lu Yu's moral temperament, it matters a great deal, and the lines with more accuracy, if less artistry, should read:

"Across the ages there are Yao and Shun
As well as K'uei and Lung who served them.
How distant seem three thousand years!
And yet the spirit [of those times] can be recaptured.
How then can I, a man of parts,
Become corrupted by the vulgar world?
If only Tao is there, what is the difference?
Even grandees at court[9] are all from humble origins."[10]

The poem, then, turns out to be one of an affirmative optimism that finds consolation in a philosophic, rather than worldly, standard of success; and it is decidedly not a poem of resignation to the inevitability of old age which comes alike to saint and scoundrel.

Following Soulié de Morant too uncritically, Mr. Rexroth has gone even further astray from the spirit of the original in "The Purple Peach Tree" by Su Tung-p'o (p. 86). His note to this translation tells the reader that the poem is a political allegory, inveighing against the court eunuchs; yet it is difficult to see how his reading could convey this double sense. Mr. Rexroth's version reads:

THE PURPLE PEACH TREE

"Timidly, still half asleep, it has blossomed.
Afraid of the teeth of the frost, it was late this year.
Now its crimson mixes with the
Brilliance of the cherries and apricots.
Unique, it is more beautiful than snow and hoar frost.
Under the cold, its heart awoke to the Spring season.
Full of wine, sprawling on the alabaster table,
I dream of the ancient poet who could not distinguish
The peach, the cherry and the apricot, except by their
Green leaves and dark branches."

Having begun with an error in the title (*peach* should be *plum*), the translator has been forced to alter the other names of fruit trees in order to force some sense from what would otherwise be contradictions. Su Tung-p'o is actually comparing himself to the plum tree which has flowered late in an unseasonable period. Fear-

[9] For "Ancestral Temple" as "grandees at court," see *A Concordance to the Poems of Tu Fu*, II, 559, lines 17-18: "My wish goes out to the mountain woods as once did both Ch'ao Fu and Hsü Yu; you on the other hand, *are like a jewel in the Dynastic Ancestral Temple* and can be compared with the ministers of Shun, K'uei and Lung."

[10] For "wilderness and fields" as "humble origins," see *A Concordance to the Poems of Tu Fu*, II, 534, lines 37-38: "Su Tsung's new officials in Ling-wu were of unequal worth, and unauthorized ones came to wear the uniform, most of them rising *from humble conditions.*"

ing that his standards are out of key with the times, he has made a pretense of conforming to contemporary manners, just as the plum blossoms show a bit of the pink of common peach or apricot blossoms, and so he is able to conceal those superior ideals which men of a more degenerate age cannot comprehend. The somewhat arrogant superiority of attitude, evident in such a bald paraphrase, is better disguised in the floral analogy. A more faithful translation might read:

> "Timid and indolent, it has blossomed late,
> Worried lest its frosty aspect not be in fashion.
> Showing the faint pink of peach or apricot blossoms,
> It still keeps the austerity of snow and frost.
>
> Its cold nature is unwilling to conform to spring behavior,
> Although a wine-flush uncontrolledly suffuses the fair skin.[11]
> An older poet would not recognize in it the qualities of plum,
> Seeing its green leaves and dark branches."[12]

A secondary cause of mistranslation in Mr. Rexroth's volume is a disregard for the formal structure of a Chinese poem. Granted that the Chinese poet frequently takes liberties with the rules of prosody, they are so ingrained in his versification that they can usually be assumed by the translator as a guide, in the absence of better, through the variants, ambiguities, and ellipses of a Chinese poem. The use of caesura between the fourth and fifth characters of a seven-character line is often a valuable clue to the syntax of the entire line. In Su Tung-p'o's "The Purple Peach Tree" (p. 86), already noted, the line which reads literally "Cold heart not dare follow Spring manner" cannot be translated "Under the cold, its heart awoke to the Spring season," since this reading places the caesura between the first and second characters and ignores the negative completely. The line should read "Its cold nature is unwilling to conform to Spring behavior." Similarly, by observing the caesura, Mr. Rexroth's lines in "By the Winding River" by Tu Fu (p. 14),

> "I cry out to the Spring wind,
> And the light and the passing hours,"

should read,

> "Tell the Spring scene,
> 'All things shall pass . . . '"

Close attention to the syntactical parallelism between the lines of a couplet often gives the clue to the reading of an ambiguous line. An example on the simplest level can be seen in the initial parallelism of the couplet from Lu Yu's "Idleness" (p. 121) which in literal translation reads:

"Study	classics	wife	ask	strange	words;
Taste	wine	son	pour	overflow	cup."

The translation,

> "I call for wine and my son
> Fills my cup till it runs over,"

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[11] Rexroth has here followed Soulié de Morant, who has misread or been misled by his text into reading "table" (Radical 16) for "flesh" (Radical 130 plus 16).

[12] An allusion to the lines, "I recognize the peach by the absence of green leaves; / I distinguish the cherry by the presence of dark branches," by Shih Man-ch'ing.

is clearly impossible for the second line, since it is evident from the parallelism that the initial two characters are modifiers for the third in both lines. The translation of *ch'ang* (to taste, to experience) as "call for" would invalidate the reading in any case. In the Tu Fu poem, "By the Winding River" (p. 14), parallelism strongly suggests that the shift in point of view from particular to general in the couplet translated as:

> "Everywhere I go, I owe
> Money for wine. History
> Records few men who lived to be
> Seventy,"

would be better changed to make both statements general:

> "Wine debts are nothing strange; people everywhere have them;
> And men living to be seventy have been rare from of old."

By far the most serious kind of error found in these translations is that of disregarding the function of literary allusion in Chinese poetry. Fidelity to the spirit of the originals is well-nigh impossible in translation without an adequate knowledge of the corpus of literature known and constantly employed by the individual poet, or—since life is short and Chinese art extremely long—without the services of a commentator whose annotations will supply our deficiencies. Reference to the annotated edition of Lu Yu's poems (Shanghai, 1934) would have prevented the confusion of ancient worthies in "I Get up at Dawn" examined earlier, as well as the misunderstood tenor of the poem's conclusion. A similar example of a literary reference which has been "translated out," and its vital function in determining the intent of the poem eliminated, is found in another of Lu Yu's poems, "Evening in the Village" (p. 119). After setting the scene of a moonlight night in a tranquil mountain village, the poet reflects that slander has driven him far from court and consoles himself for being relegated to the country, in lines which Mr. Rexroth translates,

> "I
> Do not miss my horses and
> Chariots. Here at home I
> Have plenty of pigs and chickens,"

a reading which suggests in Lu Yu a complacent lack of ambition beyond filling his stomach, and also ignores the value given to the lines by two literary allusions. The first refers to the lines from T'ao Ch'ien's "Drinking Wine" No. 5:

> "I built my house near where others dwell
> And yet there is no clamour of carriage and horses."[13]

The new context, then, suggests not that Lu Yu does not miss horses and chariots which it is doubtful he ever possessed, but that he does not regret the absence of visitors.

The last line of the poem alludes to lines from Han Yü's "First Voyage on the Southern River" No. 2[14]:

> "I wish to join with them [the country folk] in their festivals,
> And in Spring and Autumn feast them with chickens and pigs."

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[13] William Acker, *T'ao the Hermit* (London, 1952), p. 66.

[14] See von Zach, *Han Yü's Poetische Werke* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), pp. 195-196.

On the basis of this allusion it becomes clear that Lu Yu's alternative to the activity of a court official's life is not indulgent self-sufficiency or animal husbandry, but a sincere cultivation of the friendship and welfare of the simple folk among whom he is now placed.

A number of Mr. Rexroth's deviations from the central intent of a poem seem to stem from attributing to the Chinese poet attitudes and ideals consistent with a Western lyric poet of the nineteenth or twentieth century and ignoring the framework of ideas and conditioned thinking in which the Chinese poet worked. The two Lu Yu translations discussed above illustrate this lack of rapport with the intellectual milieu and temperament of the poet. It seems to this reviewer that Mr. Rexroth indulges the same historical faliacy in his extended remarks on Tu Fu in the notes, where he states that in his opinion Tu Fu is "the greatest non-epic, non-dramatic poet who has survived in any language," whose only possible rivals in this role are Sappho, Catullus, and Baudelaire. Tu Fu is well able to sustain the mantle of such praise, but his affinity with Baudelaire, which Robert Payne has also stressed,[15] needs clarification.

Granted that both share the acute sensibility noted by Mr. Rexroth, it is difficult to concur in his characterization of Tu Fu as the neurasthenic creator of a poetic personality, "a fictional character half mask, half revelation," a judgment which would seem to view the eighth-century Chinese poet in the light of nineteenth-century European romanticism. Tu Fu's moral fervor is the positive and direct outgrowth of a conventional Confucian ethic; Baudelaire's moral perversity, no less fervent, and his Satanism are the negative and indirect expression of a Christian and Catholic ethic, the existence of which they acknowledge by the very act of rebellion. Both attitudes produce high moral indignation, but only in Baudelaire's case could the compulsion to self-torment be called neurasthenic and his deliberate apostasy be labeled a mask.

There is a consistency between life and poetry and a naive absence of pose which informs all of Tu Fu's work, diverse as are its purposes. For him the "Confucian myth" appears to have been a constant reality, a conviction which made the apparent collapse of the Confucian state in the revolutions of his era all the more painful. If he suffered great personal hardships and if he seems to have lost faith in the court of his day, his later poems betray no such agonized isolation from his society and its ideals as Baudelaire's, but, on the contrary, express an almost transcendent sympathy with the suffering of his world. Baudelaire more rarely rises above revulsion and rebellious isolation to the high plateau of unconditional compassion achieved by Tu Fu in his better poems. While the Chinese poet frequently feels despair, his is not the insidious *accidia* which progressively overcomes the Parisian, and he would have found reprehensible, if not incomprehensible, the lines:

> "L'Ennui, fruit de la morne incuriosité,
> Prit les proportions de l'immortalité."

It is not a pleasant task to find fault with a work which represents such an ideal collaboration, that of a modern poet re-expressing the lyrics of excellent poets, long gone, who have seldom enjoyed such sympathetic literary treatment—or to point out the shortcomings of a work which in its execution has so much that is admirable. Those who care for Chinese poetry do not willingly discourage the impulse in others which leads to translations of this poetic quality. I sincerely hope that in the future Mr. Rexroth will give us the "100 Poems of Sung" and "100 Poems of Tu Fu" which he promises in his introduction. I hope as feelingly

[15] Robert Payne, *The White Pony* (New York, 1947), p. 225.

that in their preparation he will read previous translators but trust none, and will make the acquaintance of the Chinese commentator, the best friend a translator ever had. Unfortunately, a certain amount of pedantry is a prerequisite for the translation which is both readable and reliable.

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MODERN FICTION STUDIES. Henry James Special Number. Vol. III, No. 1, Spring 1957. 96 p.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY FICTION. Special Henry James Issue. Vol. XII, No. 1, June 1957. 96 p.

VERSIONS OF MELODRAMA: A STUDY OF THE FICTION AND DRAMA OF HENRY JAMES, 1865-1897. By Leo B. Levy. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957. x, 130 p.

THE PAINTER'S EYE: NOTES AND ESSAYS ON THE PICTORIAL ARTS. By Henry James. Selected and edited by John L. Sweeney. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956. 274 p.

The recent James number of *Modern Fiction Studies* exhibits a variety of critical and scholarly procedures. Two of the contributors present work in progress toward books.

Oscar Cargill's "Critical Reappraisal" of *The Portrait of a Lady* is not so much a critical reappraisal of the novel as a review of earlier scholarship and criticism, particularly of speculations about James's "sources." Is Ralph Touchett a self-portrait? Is Isabel Archer Minnie Temple or isn't she? The pondering of such questions as if they could be answered with yes or no implies a rather curious notion of the artistic process; and after ten pages the conclusion that "the characters of *The Portrait of a Lady* are composite figures," though sensible, seems lame. The second half of Professor Cargill's essay is more illuminating, but the whole essay betrays its destination; it is to be part of a James handbook, where the review of James scholarship presumably has its place.

In R. W. Stallman's long and unmellowed essay on "The Time-Theme in *The Ambassadors*," another piece of work in progress, the marks of incompletion are pronounced. Moreover, the essay is thesis-ridden. That "James manipulates his criticism of puritanical morality by the metaphor of submission to the clock" may be true; but Stallman makes this metaphor the essential meaning of the novel ("Trading with time, that's what the novel is all about"), and one's doubts about its centrality grow on the misconceptions it is tied to. For example, "As Mamie Pocock is too late for Chad, so in another sense Strether is too late for Maria Gostrey"; or, Chad "can afford to submit to Woollett and the clocked way of life because he has had his fling." But Chad's relation to Marie de Vionnet turning out to have been a mere fling is precisely what makes him the unregenerate Woollett man, the "old" Chad merely; and what prevents Strether's acceptance of Maria's veiled proposal is that his experience of Paris has taken him far beyond her, so that marrying her "would be almost of the old order" (as James put it in his preliminary scenario). To overlook these final positions of Strether and Chad in the scheme of the novel is to overlook one of the ironies essential to its total meaning and effect.

If Robert L. Gale's "Religion Imagery in Henry James's Fiction" is somehow disappointing because the conscientious tabulation of images leads to no revelation of startling interest, the volume fortunately contains three more essays, all excel-

lent in their own ways. In "The Literary Convictions of Henry James" Leon Edel formulates an answer to those who are in the habit of dismissing James's critical writings "as the pleasant and intelligent utterances of a wise writer, but not the work of a literary critic." The answer lies in James's refusal to divorce "criticism from the critic and art from the artist," that is, in the pragmatic and Emersonian nature of his criticism, whose aim was not only "to take intellectual possession" of the thing criticized, but to establish a relation with the mind shining out from between its lines. No one will be surprised that Professor Edel handles his theme with authority and subtlety. R. W. B. Lewis's piece on "The Vision of Grace" in *The Wings of the Dove* and Joseph J. Firebaugh's on *The Turn of the Screw* are equally successful in illuminating subjects beset by complexities. With a subtlety which is unpretentious because it proceeds from a fine sensitivity, Lewis elucidates James's extension of a melodramatic treatment of marriage into profound religious allegory. And Firebaugh seems to me to put an effective period to the old argument about the reality of the ghosts simply by "putting aside the question" for once and approaching the story as moral allegory. The result is a significant modification of Robert Heilman's reading of Bly as an image of Eden, the governess now appearing as "the inadequate priestess of an irresponsible deity" (the Harley Street uncle) who "destroys the children" by imposing upon them "her conviction that knowledge is sin, and that lack of knowledge, or innocence, is the only salvation." Neither Lewis nor Firebaugh are done justice by short summaries, since the value of both depends on their close attention to detail. The James number of *MFS* closes with a check list of books and articles about James particularly useful for the years since 1950.

The year 1957 is marked by the denigration of the governess of Bly. The special James issue of *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* contains two studies of *The Turn of the Screw*, both of which agree with Firebaugh in turning the tables on her and considering the "reality" of the ghosts as immaterial or relative. John Lydenberg's interpretation of the story ("The Governess Turns the Screw") is indeed very close to Firebaugh's. For Lydenberg the governess is an "almost classic case" of "the authoritarian character," compulsively assuming the role of the "expiatory victim" (a phrase which she applies to herself) at the same time that she terrorizes the children and the housekeeper. And, since her actions and attitudes—"her incessant vigilance, unrelenting pressure, selfless submission, and refusal to compromise in any manner with evil"—belong to what is loosely called the "Puritan view of Christianity," the story turns into "a covert, if unconscious, attack" on a strain of Christianity James knew well. The other essay on this story, by the late Harold C. Goddard, though never before published, was written about 1920, that is, long before Edmund Wilson's Freudian interpretation. Quite without benefit of Freudian symbolism, it arrives at the conclusion that the narrator, that is, the governess, reveals herself as insane. Whether she creates the ghosts or whether "insanity is precisely the power to perceive objective existences" not apprehended by others are questions which the story leaves unanswered. The only thing Professor Goddard insists on is that the children do not see the ghosts. For the story is "a tale of incorruptible childhood"; the children "are withered at last in the flame of the governess' passion," a conclusion "rendered tragic rather than merely horrible by the heroism that they display." The essay is indeed what Leon Edel in his prefatory note calls it, "a singularly valuable example of textual study." For Goddard reaches his conclusions only after having scrupulously weighed every detail, with the result of once more demonstrating the tantalizing ambiguity which pervades the whole story (even including the scene in which Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, *seems* to identify the ghost of Peter Quint) and which, in accord with James's intention, allows so much contributory scope to the reader's imagination.

Floyd Stovall's essay on "The Jolly Corner" is another, but, it seems to me, a less successful exercise in close reading. In *The Turn of the Screw* the fundamental problem of interpretation is posed by the carefully maintained point of view: the question being how much of what the governess tells us is produced by her own idiosyncrasy—her authoritarian personality, her religious passion, her insanity. The problem of interpreting "The Jolly Corner" is less amenable to purely rational analysis, since it hinges on the assessment of the symbolical values borne by figures and events. Stovall maintains that the story contains not two but three "selves" of Spencer Brydon, and that the customary identification of the "ghost" whom Brydon first pursues, then flees, on the fourth floor of the old house with the disfigured apparition which finally confronts him at the bottom of the stairs is wrong: that the fourth-floor ghost represents indeed what Brydon might have been had he never left New York, but that the ugly apparition is something else—"the false self that for thirty-three years has overlaid Brydon's true self" and kept him from acknowledging his love for Alice Staverton. This interpretation is ingenious, but the evidence offered in its support is far from compelling. Indeed, the last and really explicatory section of the story identifies the ugly apparition quite clearly with what Brydon might have been if he had stayed home (" 'He's none of *me*, even as I *might* have been,' Brydon sturdily declared. But she kept the clearness that was like the breath of infallibility. 'Isn't the whole point that you'd have been different?' " etc.) And the emotional power of the whole story, after all, comes in large part from its dramatic picture of an involvement with the ghostly world—from the fact that once such ghosts are raised they will not be laid, that once Brydon begins to pursue the thing he fears it will not leave him alone. The "talent for practical affairs" which Brydon discovers in himself near the beginning of the story is part of this, is the first step in his pursuit of the "self" which might have been indeed, and which he can now exercise only by confronting it.

Walter Wright's essay on *The Golden Bowl*, finally, is an admirable defense of the novel against "two types of oversimplication" which see in Maggie Verver a creature either of saintly good or of utter evil. Maggie, Wright maintains, is "neither saint nor witch," but a human being, young, sensitive, and ignorant, who undergoes an experience which matures her. And the story of her marriage with Amerigo is a story of the growth and mutual discovery which finally make the marriage real. Charlotte Stant is indeed "destined to melancholy," but the fault for that lies largely in her willingness to subjugate her feeling to her desire for economic security; and the "silken halter" with which Maggie sees her led and "the cage in which she imagines her confined" are not evidence of the Ververs' callousness (as Matthiessen and others have maintained), but images expressive of "Maggie's awakening pity." Wright's reading, the result of a careful consideration of the points of view from which the story is told, is filled with acute insights and happy formulations.

Leo B. Levy's *Versions of Melodrama* is an attempt to describe and analyze "some of the distinctive moral qualities in the work of Henry James"; its theme is that "melodrama is an essential Jamesian mode of perceiving and organizing moral experience." Beginning with such well-known examples as *The American*, the insistent search for melodramatic elements in James often leads to illuminating insights. But it also leads to a simplification of Jame's later and more complex fiction. Melodrama, Mr. Levy says early in his book, is blind to the fact that a "conscience presupposes that evil knows good," and this blindness precisely is the "prevailing trait of the Jamesian villain."

This applies neatly to the de Bellegardes in *The American*, but are James's late villains, Kate Croy, for instance, thus blind? Indeed, are there "villains" in James's latest works? Is Kate one? And, finally, are those late novels really melo-

dramatic? It seems to me rather that, although they contain the sort of moral violence (deceit, conspiracy, betrayal) that is part of melodrama, the complexity not only of James's method but of the thematic concerns which justify the method remove them from the conceptual simplicity of melodrama. In part, this is indeed Mr. Levy's point, the point, for instance, of his extremely interesting demonstration of what happened when James adapted his fictions for the stage, the play often turning, as Mr. Levy says of the theatrical version of *The American*, into "a systematic debasement and vulgarization of the novel." And yet, when he writes that "the major insistence of the later work" is "that a surface of maintained calm supported by 'forms' is everyone's real refuge and safety," that "James now exhibits benevolence toward good and evil alike," or that ambiguity "is a systematic technique of delay and suspense," close as in such remarks he comes to the truth, he nevertheless stops short of the core of the late James (which is a conflict between two different kinds of moral feeling, each of which is capable of beauty and corruption, each of which is necessary for the conduct of life, and neither of which is sufficient alone). James's ambiguity is more than technique (even as early as "Madame de Mauves"), and his benevolence is not so much toward "evil" as toward the captive sinner. Mr. Levy's partial failure results from his overstating his case. Here and there he seems to confuse melodrama with the interpretation of events simply in theatrical terms. But the failure *is* partial and perhaps noticeable primarily as the disappointment of an expectation aroused by his substantial and perceptive book.

In *The Painter's Eye* John L. Sweeney has collected thirty of James's essays on the visual arts (only five of them previously reprinted). Included is James's first essay on painting so far identified, a review of Hamerton's *Contemporary French Painters* of 1868. A good two-thirds of the pieces date from the 1870s, but the latest is of 1897. The volume is supplied with three appendices (listing James's essays on the visual arts not included in the volume, his stories and novels concerning artists and works of art, and his travel sketches with comments on art), with two indexes (one general and one of the pictures discussed), and with a well-informed introduction. All in all, it is a very useful and pleasing tribute to James's lifelong devotion not only to painting but to all the arts of representation.

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AMERICAN LITERARY NATURALISM, A DIVIDED STREAM. By Charles Child Walcutt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956. 332 p.

Mr. Walcutt offers a study of naturalism which is comprehensive, detailed, scholarly, and—at least considered broadly—entirely sound. There has been, he feels, too great an effort on the part of previous critics to quarantine the term "naturalism" in its literary application—to set naturalism and the writers with whom we associate it neatly apart in boxes of precise definition (most frequently labeled "pessimistic" or "optimistic," depending upon the social or philosophical bias of the writer). It has become a habit, in other words, to speak of the naturalists (grouping them very tightly) as if they offered a distinct and consistent view of the universe, as if they always did this consciously, and as if they did this in easily recognizable forms.

Mr. Walcutt's approach appears to me more reasonable. He suggests that writers, like ordinary individuals, are at times confused thinkers; that they are notorious for their inability to remain true to an abstract doctrine when faced

with the realities of a particular work of art; and that they are irritating—especially to the critic who seeks to find order in their work—in their determination to do things their own way. Recognizing this, he has sought for a central thesis broad enough to include the major figures, yet fluid enough to allow each his individual qualities as a thinker and as an artist.

The result is the "divided stream" of his title, the central critical thread upon which he strings a historical discussion of naturalism and a group of chapters on individual writers. American naturalism stems, he tells us, from transcendentalism, from a division of its "mainstream" toward the close of the nineteenth century. "When this mainstream . . . divides . . . it produces two rivers of thought. One, the approach to Spirit through intuition, nourishes idealism, progressivism, and social radicalism. The other, the approach to Nature through science, plunges into the dark canyon of mechanistic determinism" (pp. vii-viii). The problem, Mr. Walcutt is aware, is not as clear cut as these statements might seem to imply. Once the "monist sea" of the transcendentalists had been divided, its branches refused to move off in clearly defined channels. Time and experience narrowed and widened the strip of land separating them; individual writers, caught between the new doctrine and a particular literary performance, frequently bathed in one, or the other, or both streams indiscriminately.

Mr. Walcutt's central thesis stresses a point which is seldom given emphasis. American naturalism was undoubtedly, to a large extent, the product of foreign influences, but perhaps not to the extent writers at times would lead us to believe. No cultural tradition, we know, ever simply ceases; rather, when it finds itself inadequate, it reaches—among other places—back into itself for materials of its reshaping. It appears only natural, consequently, that the author should find substantial grounds for the association with the earlier American tradition.

After an introductory chapter, and one on Zola, Mr. Walcutt comes to the American writers. The list—except for the inclusion of Winston Churchill and the omission of any extended discussion of Faulkner—is the usual one: Frederic and Garland, Crane, London, Norris, Dreiser, Anderson, Farrell, Steinbeck, Hemingway, and Dos Passos. The quality of the chapters varies. That on Crane is good, though I think the author's praise is perhaps excessive: "To define Crane's naturalism is to understand one of the few perfect and successful embodiments of the theory in the American novel . . . Crane is the Christopher Marlowe of American naturalism—and we have had no Shakespeare" (pp. 66-67). London is given the usual raking over the coals. The chapters on Norris and Anderson are generally excellent.

The finest chapter, however, appears to me that on Dreiser. Here the author makes no bones about it; he has read Dreiser with complete personal understanding and pleasure, and having done so he can throw an at times irritating critical jargon to the winds and write with spirit and valuable insight. Dreiser's novels are not treated in the same clinical fashion as are most of the other books; they are treated as novels, and Dreiser himself is treated as a novelist (not as a social theorist or as a philosopher).

This brings me to my principal criticism of the book, the fact that the author spoils the effectiveness of a number of the good things he has to say by the manner in which he says them. Mr. Walcutt belongs to what might be termed the "Protean-ism-flux" school of contemporary literary criticism, a group which identifies itself by its use of a particularly annoying critical idiom. If something is not so nebulous that it can be described as "protean," these critics invariably attach it to an "ism" of one sort or another—and then too, they keep reminding us, there is always the general "flux" of things. Though Mr. Walcutt employs all these devices, he is primarily an "ismist." Words of the kind so clutter his prose that,

after a time, one hardly cares any longer what he is reading; he is interested only in getting out of the morass of abstraction into which he finds himself repeatedly sucked.

The author is also addicted to the use of unnecessarily involved figures; for example, "If we were to seek a geometrical shape to picture the significant form of *The Red Badge*, it would not be the circle, the L, or the straight line of oscillation between selfishness and salvation, but the equilateral triangle. Its three points are instinct, ideals, and circumstances. Henry Fleming runs along the sides like a squirrel in a track..." (p. 82).

Mr. Walcutt's book offers a thorough, well-documented study of his subject. It provides also a number of thoughtful analyses of particular works. One merely wishes that the author had at times presented his ideas with that same regard for language which the critic so often demands of the literary artist.

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EMILY DICKINSON. POESIE. Versione e prefazione di Guido Errante. Milan: Mondadori, 1956. 623 p.

Le vicende della poesia di Emily Dickinson cominciano ormai ad esser note anche fuori degli Stati Uniti. Scritta tutta fra il 1850 e il 1886, rimase quasi completamente ignota quando la poetessa era viva, e dopo la sua morte continuò per molto tempo a resistere alla pubblicazione e alla diffusione. Le prime raccoltine si ebbero nell'ultimo decennio del secolo scorso, ma i tentativi di pubblicarla per intero non si realizzarono che qualche anno fa, accompagnati anche dal fascino che porta seco tutto ciò che sa di mistero. E la prima edizione completa è apparsa soltanto nel 1955. Si tratta quindi di una poesia rimasta a lungo schiva e segreta, quasi sfuggente, come la sua autrice. Eppure è straordinariamente viva; anzi pare che il lungo periodo di semioscurità abbia aggiunto alla sua freschezza, come se fosse stato, in certo modo, un periodo di riposo e di crescita, da cui è uscita più sicura e vigorosa. È una poesia modernissima, pura nel senso più completo, e nello stesso tempo è scevra di tutti quegli elementi che di solito si raccolgono sotto la parola comprensiva di "letteratura." Sgorga direttamente dall'animo dell'autrice come un fatto di natura. Emily Dickinson si può considerare un po' la Saffo dei tempi moderni—un avvicinamento che potrebbe estendersi perfino alle tendenze affettive delle due poetesse, che sembra avessero inclinazioni simili. Una Saffo di cui ci rimane assai di più che dell'antica, perché nell'epoca in cui ha scritto era più facile sottrarre il canto alla tirannia dissolvitrice del tempo.

Guido Errante offre ora al pubblico italiano una vasta scelta dell'opera della poetessa di Amherst: circa 450 liriche tradotte in versi e col testo originale a fronte—di gran lunga il gruppo più numeroso che delle liriche della Dickinson sia stato tradotto in qualsiasi lingua. Con la sua fatica davvero immane, egli ha reso un grande servizio alla cultura. Al volume ha poi preposto un lungo saggio introduttivo che presenta l'artista e la sua opera. Sebbene sia qua e là poco fuso, sebbene cioè ci siano passaggi bruschi da un soggetto all'altro, senza la necessaria scorrevolezza (che è forse dovuto al fatto che troppo era ciò che l'autore aveva da dire in relazione allo spazio disponibile), il saggio è senz'altro di grande interesse, e tocca anche dei punti, come quello della lingua della Dickinson, che finora non sono stati trattati molto e su cui invece non s'insisterà mai abbastanza.

Ma ciò che qui veramente importa è la traduzione. Guido Errante, come il suo compianto fratello Vincenzo, traduce in versi e non esita a prendersi tutte le

libertà possibili, facendo degli sforzi che talvolta rasentano l'acrobazia, non solo per render lo spirito dell'originale anche se questo va a scapito della lettera, e cioè del potere suggestivo della singola parola o immagine, ma anche per ricavare un verso quasi sempre ben costruito da un testo assai spesso ellittico e difficile. Il suo verso è in generale migliore di quello di Vincenzo, perché meno dannunzianeggiante. Però la sua Dickinson risulta assai più facile, più scorrevole, più intelligibile, di quella dell'originale. Lo sforzo alla chiarezza, e perciò all'interpretazione, lo conduce ogni tanto a sacrificare quel balenio scoppiettante d'immagini, solo sintatticamente slegate e si direbbe allo stadio pre-razionale, che è caratteristico del testo inglese, e ad inserire interpolazioni e spiegazioni. Questo, come altri appunti che si posson fare a una versione d'altronde degna di alte lodi, deriva dalla volontà di tradurre in verso invece che in altra forma; perché il verso è proprio quello che costringe il traduttore a staccarsi talora dalla ricchezza dell'immagine originale.

Nell'avvertenza che apre il volume, l'Errante dice: "Io non credo alla possibilità di trasporre la lirica da una lingua a un'altra; ancor meno credo all'utilità di tradurre la lirica in prosa, secondo la voga alquanto in onore negli ultimi anni." La prima di queste asserzioni è tale che nessuno oserebbe contestarla; la poesia nasce dentro un certo linguaggio, e in questo senso è intraducibile. D'altro lato, le traduzioni sono non soltanto utili, ma necessari mezzi di avvicinamento all'arte in lingua straniera. Di questo l'Errante è conscio, come prova il suo stesso lavoro; si pone allora il problema della forma da adottarsi nel tradurre la poesia, e, dopo avere esclusa quella della prosa, aggiunge: "Chi traduce un poeta ha questo compito almeno; di far sentire al lettore che quanto legge è, nell'altra lingua, poesia." Un simile assioma, staccato dal contesto, può ritenersi giusto. Ma l'Errante lo scrive per dichiarare che la poesia va tradotta in versi e non in prosa, come aveva sottinteso nelle righe precedenti. E allora non è più giusto. Che forse il lettore sente che l'originale è poesia più nei versi che nella prosa? O forse a tradurre i versi nel libero ritmo della prosa si rischia di più di sacrificare l'immediatezza dell'originale che non a trasporli nel ritmo chiuso del verso? Son sicuro che l'Errante stesso non saprebbe rispondere a queste domande se non negativamente.

Mettersi a tradurre in versi implica sempre tenere a portata di mano un bagaglio retorico di più o meno vecchia data da cui attingere continuamente, dimenticando spesso la lettera viva dell'originale e correndo il pericolo di scrivere in forme convenzionali o stereotipate, e quindi di contentarsi di un rifacimento piuttosto scialbo. Rifacimenti, e non trasposizioni da una lingua all'altra, son molte traduzioni del passato. Si pensi a quelle, pur utilissime da un punto di vista pratico, del Bellotti, del Carcano e di Andrea Maffei, le quali, sebbene abbastanza fedeli al contenuto, che cosa riproducono della forza e della suggestività della parola originale? Con ciò non si vuol mettere l'Errante al livello di quei traduttori del secolo passato. Ma si vuol dire che una traduzione esatta in prosa, che rendesse le immagini dell'originale con tutto il loro potere evocativo e suggestivo, e desse perciò a ogni parola italiana tutti i sensi anche più riposti che ha la parola corrispondente per il lettore di lingua inglese (e si sa quanto sia difficile fare una traduzione che abbia queste qualità), sarebbe stata preferibile a una traduzione in versi, necessariamente libera, assai spesso felice, ma talvolta retorica. Semmai, volendo adoperare il verso, si sarebbe potuto ricorrere al verso libero moderno, che avrebbe lasciato maggiore elasticità. Queste mie affermazioni son corroborate anche dal fatto che l'Errante, a fronte della sua versione, ha stampato il testo inglese. Ora, se si stampa l'originale a fronte, la traduzione dev'essere quanto mai esatta, altrimenti l'originale a che serve? A che servirebbe, infatti, il testo di Omero accanto alla versione del Monti, anche se questa è in se stessa un capo-

lavoro? Certo non a chi sa poco di greco e vuole aiutarsi con la traduzione per penetrare le bellezze poetiche dell'*Iliade*.

L'accenno all'*Iliade* montiana ci porta qui a una precisazione necessaria per evitar possibili fraintendimenti. Simili traduzioni, quando riescono, sono opere poetiche per se stesse, e di conseguenza, se si pongono in relazione al testo originale, van piuttosto chiamate rielaborazioni o rifacimenti nel senso più alto della parola. Il poeta e il traduttore vi collaborano in modo tale che a un certo momento il traduttore prende quasi il sopravvento sull'autore per esprimere se medesimo, facendo opera d'arte in proprio, nella quale le qualità espressive dell'originale cedono il campo a quelle del poeta-traduttore, che adopera i modi e le immagini che più l'attraggono anche se non hanno stretta relazione con i modi e le immagini del testo. Questo tipo di traduzione, per cui dobbiamo avere il rispetto che si ha per ogni opera poetica, non è quello di cui ora intendiamo parlare, semplicemente perché non riproduce, ma cerca di rifare la poesia in altra lingua. Quando si dice di preferire un'esattissima riproduzione in prosa, o in verso libero, ci si riconduce alla volontà filologica di sentire nella nuova lingua tutte le sfumature che la parola e l'immagine hanno per il lettore colto della lingua originale. Questo ci sembra particolarmente desiderabile se si vogliono trasporre delle liriche così prepotentemente moderne come quelle della Dickinson il cui ritmo tutto interno e la cui sintassi personalissima hanno un corrispondente in tanta poesia nuova del nostro secolo. Come la lirica del Novecento in ogni paese, la poesia della Dickinson si nutre già d'immagini vergini e di suggestioni verbali che risiedono nell'intimo della parola; se queste immagini e suggestioni vengono mutate, o se si perdono anche parzialmente, perché la forma in cui dovrebbero respirare si piega a uno schema metrico prestabilito e ad espressioni talvolta stereotipate, non si ottiene più una trasposizione lirica, ma qualcosa di assai diverso.

Una volta stabilito che doveva tradurre in versi, il primo problema che l'Errante ha dovuto risolvere è stato senza dubbio quello della lingua. La Dickinson scrive in una lingua di solito quotidiana, priva di retorica e di preziosismi, dalla quale sa ricavare immagini folgoranti. Proprio lei ha definito il poeta, e quindi se stessa, come colui che "Distills amazing sense / From ordinary meanings." Un po' come la lingua del Pascoli e dei migliori moderni, che appunto riempiono le parole più comuni di nuovo stupore. L'Errante ha scelto in generale proprio la lingua del Pascoli e dei crepuscolari; ed è stata una scelta eccellente. Si legga:

> "Non riporre, ti prego, il filo e l'ago,
> Perché voglio riprendere a cucire
> Non appena gli uccelli fischieranno..."
> (Pag. 117)

Son versi che paiono usciti dalle *Myricae*. Ogni tanto però gli accade di mescolare il Pascoli col D'Annunzio:

> "In notti veementi esalerebbe
> La nostra voluttà."
> (Pag. 30)

Che è, fra l'altro, una parafrasi e non una traduzione. Comunque, la lingua adottata dall'Errante rimane per lo più crepuscolare. D'altra parte, non ci manca qualche scatto verso il Giusti, lo Zanella, o addirittura il Metastasio e l'Arcadia. E questo non lo possiamo approvare. Come non pensare al Giusti quando si legge una quartina come la seguente?

> "Dimenticare!
> Posso imparare?

Dicon ch'è facile
Quando si sa."
(Pag. 265)

O al Metastasio e alle ariette delle opere buffe settecentesche davanti a quest'altra (che traduce un distico di fattura assai preziosa, ma riscattata dal lirismo dell'autrice: "My river runs to thee: / Blue sea, wilt welcome me?")

"Verso di te
Corre il mio fiume.
O azzurro mare,
Mi assorbirai?"
(Pag. 313)

Si può rilevare qui un fatto che occorre molto frequentemente in queste versioni. L'originale, che è, ripetiamo, lingua quotidiana arricchita di sensi suggestivi, non dice "mi assorbirai?", ma "sarò la benvenuta?", cioè "m'accoglierai?", che può considerarsi il verbo corrispondente di "to welcome," tanto usato nella conversazione inglese. Il "mi assorbirai" dell'Errante ha implicazioni assai diverse e crea un'atmosfera d'annullamento che, se pur suggerita dal contesto, non è detta, e di conseguenza andrebbe lasciata come suggerita. Allo stesso modo, quando la Dickinson, attingendo alle abitudini quotidiane della sua abbigliatura, con immagine che è quanto mai spontanea, dice che le montagne "toccano il firmamento con la cuffia," l'Errante altera quell'immagine scrivendo che "toccano il cielo con le loro cime" (p. 343)—che è espressione comune, ma d'altro genere, troppo convenzionale e scolorita. Questi son soltanto casi comunissimi, e, anche se sembrano piccolezze, bisogna ammettere che sono invece quelle sfumature in cui consiste il linguaggio della poesia. E ci sono inoltre i casi, meno frequenti, in cui le immagini del testo inglese, nella rielaborazione necessaria per costruire il verso italiano, vengono addirittura soppresse. Oppure quelli in cui il traduttore, ancora per fare il verso, è costretto ad aggiungere e ad allungare.

A volte poi l'Errante scrive dei versi dal ritmo abbandonato, che non hanno nessuna parentela con l'originale. Quando la Dickinson, per esempio, dice che il sole, nell'oro del tramonto, "cerca lungamente una compagnia per la notte," l'Errante dice che cerca una compagna "per l'infinita sua notte d'amore" (p. 233)—un verso dannunziano, stanco, che tradisce anche lo spirito dell'originale. E se il testo dice: "We didn't do it though!" ("ma non lo facemmo!"), egli scrive: "In quella notte sterile d'amore" (p. 340), che è ben altro, ed è solo letterario.

Si aggiunga che, oltre a far cadere in tanti tranelli, la versione poetica porta a scriver delle cose piuttosto bruttine. Talora l'Errante ricorre a inversioni un po' stantie, quali "La polvere tua fama avrà appassito" (p. 385), o a scriver cose come "umilemente" (p. 265), o ad accogliere risultati come questo:

"Che l'atomo cadesse
E il cielo fermo stesse,"
(Pag. 255)

che è certo trito. Lo stesso direi della troppa frequenza delle rime tronche, che son troppo facili e disturbano, specialmente se non necessitate dalla tessitura ritmica del componimento.

Un ultimo appunto, a cui si è accennato da principio, si riferisce alla sintassi della Dickinson. È una sintassi ellittica, piena di espressioni staccate, dove la mancanza dei verbi crea la suggestione della parola. L'Errante spessissimo scioglie l'ellissi, dando i verbi sottintesi e costruendo frasi "che tornano." Le sue interpretazioni sono in generale giuste, ma ciò che ne risulta non è più una trasposizione dell'origi-

nale, a causa di tutte le semplificazioni che distruggono il potente martellamento dell'inglese della Dickinson. Basti ricordare la lirica "If I may have it, when it's dead" (pp. 390-391). Se il traduttore si fosse tenuto più aderente alla lettera, senza preoccuparsi di far versi, sarebbe riuscito a rendere assai meglio le caratteristiche dell'originale. L'ellissi è il modo sintattico della Dickinson, e se si sopprime l'ellissi si sopprime anche gran parte del potere evocativo della sua poesia.

A mio parere, la questione più importante da dibattersi riguardo all'opera di Guido Errante era se fosse preferibile tradurre in prosa o in versi. E per dimostrare il mio punto di vista, mi sono intrattenuto sulle cosiddette sfumature della traduzione—sfumature, s'intende, solo in un certo senso. E per ciò che ho notato, non si tratta di errori d'interpretazione. Ché anzi va detto che gli errori, in un lavoro di questa mole, sono sorprendentemente pochi, e quasi inesistenti. Ne cito un paio qui, che però non si riferiscono alla comprensione del testo inglese, ma all'uso di certe espressioni italiane. A p. 257 la parola "tonta," che vuol dire "stupida" o "imbecille," è usata impropriamente per "perplessa" (che è il significato di "puzzled"), e a p. 537 "entitles us" ("ci dà diritto a") è tradotto con "investe noi del titolo a . . . ," un calco sull'inglese che in italiano non vuol dir nulla. Qua e là poi s'incontra qualche errore di logica espressiva: a p. 348, la parola "opaquest" è resa con "la più dura," ma sotto si dice che gli occhi "videro" attraverso questa più dura pietra; sarebbe stato più indicato conservare la logica dell'immagine originale: "videro attraverso la più opaca pietra." Ma questi sono screzi d'un valore assai relativo.

Eppoi, mentre si parla di leggieri difetti, non bisogna dimenticare tutti i tratti felici della traduzione dell'Errante, che son davvero moltissimi, e son quelli che contano. Non c'è dubbio che, adottando il suo metodo e quindi traducendo in versi, sarebbe stato quasi impossibile far meglio.

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THE CLASSICS AND RENAISSANCE THOUGHT. By Paul Oskar Kristeller. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955. 106 p. (Martin Classical Lectures, Vol. XV.)

Professor Kristeller, in the relatively short space allowed by the limits of four lectures, delivered at Oberlin College, has treated compactly a large number of themes pertaining to the place of the classics in Renaissance thought. He has clarified the various aspects of this subject, and has dispelled many confusions which have arisen through anachronistic interpretations in the past half century. He has re-established a sense of proportion which seems to have been lost through the ardor with which overzealous polemists, eager to "rehabilitate" the pre-Renaissance centuries, have blurred the distinctive features of the Renaissance and particularly of Renaissance humanism.

The lectures deal with the humanist movement, the Aristotelian tradition, and Renaissance Platonism, and finally, returning to Renaissance humanism, further elucidate its relationship to paganism and Christianity.

The author begins to clear his ground by pointing out the features of the humanism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He distinguishes it from the mediaeval approach to the classics (secular learning was limited to Latin and a few Greek writers, and subordinated to an "amalgamation with religious or theological doctrine") and from the more selective classicism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as from the twentieth-century conception of humanism. He finds that, as a result of the enthusiasm and comprehensive interest of the

men of the Renaissance in classical studies, these occupied "a more central place in the civilization of the period, and were more intimately linked with its other intellectual tendencies and achievements than at any earlier or later time in the history of Western Europe."

Professor Kristeller considers the literary, rhetorical, and moral preoccupations of the Renaissance humanists, rather than a particular philosophical tendency or system, as being the important traits of the period. He reminds us that the writings of the ancient Greeks and Latins were copied in large numbers and made widely available by the Renaissance scholars (even before the introduction of printing), whereas formerly they were left idly stacked in the monasteries. The humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries discovered previously ignored classical writers, studied more comprehensively writers who were only partly known, and brought into light new formulas of thought and of expression. Their methods of textual and historical criticism reflect a new inquiring attitude of the mind, which was further developed by editions of complete works, Latin and vernacular translations, commentaries, and original compositions modeled after the originals.

Certain intellectual tendencies of the fourteenth and subsequent centuries were already breaking with mediaeval tradition, for which reinforcement and clearer formulation were sought and found in the ancient writers. Humanism, by furthering this process, exerted a direct and indirect influence upon the thinking attitudes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, made people aware of all the philosophic and mystical systems of antiquity, gave them a choice to absorb whatever they found congenial to their minds and sensibility, and set the basis for the more original philosophic systems of the seventeenth century.

Professor Kristeller corrects the many historians of the twentieth century who have not realized that the failure of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to produce original philosophies does not mean that these centuries did not experience a repolarization. There was a definite break from the previous ages, which can be witnessed in the literary and speculative writings as well as in the artistic productions of the Renaissance. The fact that the men of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were strongly conscious of a break with the past, that their mode of thinking and feeling was not a matter of sporadic, individual eccentricities, but of ever-widening collective currents, has been too lightly dismissed by those who, reacting to the Michelet kind of interpretation, have gone to the other extreme of shading off differences and minimizing the distinctness of the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In dealing with the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions, Professor Kristeller uses the same sound historical and analytical approach. He is in full control of the knowledge accumulated by scholars concerning the vicissitudes of these traditions, the more so since he himself has made most notable contributions in this field. In tracing the fortunes of Aristotelianism and Platonism from their beginnings to the sixteenth century and later, he brings out what each epoch knew of these two philosophies and the accretions and transformations to which they were subjected; what parts of the Platonic and Aristotelian writings were of interest among the ancient Greeks, the Latins, the Byzantines, the Arabs and the Jews, and the westerners of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance; what interpretations they received; how their philosophies were transmitted from one country or from one epoch to another; what influences they exerted; and how they were used—and abused—to justify, buttress, complement, or modify philosophical or theological systems or tendencies of particular schools or periods.

In the course of this summary but clear review, the author brings out the importance of many methodological principles which are not often kept in mind by

those who deal with intellectual history. He points out that the Aristotelianism of the later Middle Ages was "characterized not so much by a common system of ideas as by a common source material, a common terminology, a common set of definitions and problems and a common method of discussing these problems." He makes it clear that many of the problems discussed "grew out of mediaeval philosophical preoccupations rather than from Aristotle's own writings." He laments the tendency to study mediaeval thought without distinguishing between philosophy and theology. He warns against making indiscriminate use of such terms as Thomism, Occamism, Scotism, Averroism, and against committing anachronistic errors such as assigning to Thomism an immediate preponderant authority over other philosophies, which did not come about until later centuries. He rightly criticizes also the failure of historians to distinguish the ways in which the influence of Aristotle continued or even increased in some fields of thought through the sixteenth century and later. He attributes this failure partly to a sympathetic leaning of some scholars toward the Renaissance anti-Aristotelians, and partly to the methodological error of stressing "origins rather than continuations of intellectual and other developments."

Professor Kristeller's methodological insights also illuminate his discussion of the development of Platonism. He underscores the point that the difficulties in elucidating the problems connected with the Platonic tradition arise from the very nature of the Platonic ideas and even more from the indirect and elusive way they were first discussed in Plato's own writings—which led to a variety of interpretations and elaborations. He then examines the transformations to which the system was subjected, and the infiltrations of several brands of Platonism or of separate Platonic themes into the philosophy, science, and literature of the Renaissance and of the post-Renaissance.

One misses any reference to the *zetetic* aspect of Plato's dialogues, which was stressed by the later Academy and was revived, along with other skeptical currents, during the sixteenth century. In fact, his treatment of the several aspects of rationalism (of classical origin) in the Renaissance seems to be overshadowed by the emphasis on Platonism and Aristotelianism. And yet, if there is a distinction between the Renaissance and the previous centuries—and the author argues convincingly for such a distinction—this, in my view, is due not so much to the dogmatic systems which prevailed during the Renaissance as to the less assertive but more critical currents which developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These currents meant a questioning attitude in the field of scholarship (textual criticism of sacred writings, selective acceptance of the texts of revelation, critical history of the Church, etc.) and in speculative thought. What was questioned was not only specific doctrines, but the very premises of philosophic tenets or of theological dogma. These premises were challenged formally from the epistemological standpoint and more informally—but more extensively—from the standpoint of a broader experience with history, of the discovery of the peoples of the New World, and of a closer acquaintance with the nations of the Old World.

While the author seems to me to underestimate the importance of the tendencies of the sixteenth century to develop a deistic and even a skeptical attitude, he soundly maintains that what is of central relevance for the Renaissance is not "irreligion" but the important "changes and transformations which affected religious thought during that period." The main achievements of Renaissance humanism are that it attained "a much more accurate and more complete acquaintance with ancient Latin and especially Greek literature than had been possible in the preceding age"; that it placed the study of religion and ecclesiastical subjects on the same basis of textual, historical, and rational criticism as that of secular

subjects; and that these achievements initiated a chain of changes in thought and feeling which developed more fully in later centuries.

Professor Kristeller's lectures constitute a remarkable synthesis of a wide range of subjects. They are a dispassionate and penetrating *mise au point* of one of the most heatedly debated questions of our century. At the same time, they are a model in the methodology of intellectual history.

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THE OLYMPIA EPICS OF JAN VAN DER NOOT. A Facsimile Edition of 'Das Buch Extasis,' 'Een Cort Begryp der XII. Boecken Olympiados' and 'Abregé des douze livres Olympiades.' Edited by C. A. Zaalberg. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956. xiv, 274 p. (Neerlandica Traiectina, Vol. III.)

The re-evaluation of Jan van der Noot's life and work, which began in the nineteenth century, may reach a decisive stage in the twentieth. At the beginning of the present century he was known mainly through Albert Verwey's anthology, *Gedichten van Jonker Jan van der Noot* (Amsterdam, 1895). Verwey stimulated August Vermeylen to produce his biographical study, *Leven en Werken van Jonker Jan van der Noot* (Antwerp, 1899). The fact that it was again Verwey who inspired Dr. Zaalberg to edit the present volume gvies us another measure of the influence of this great writer and teacher.

Although Prims published some interesting documents in *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Kon. Vlaamsche Academie* (1929, 1937), many aspects of van der Noot's life and personality still remain a mystery. Even the dates of his birth and death (ca. 1539-ca. 1595) are uncertain. We know that the proud patrician of Antwerp lost his fortune, fled to exile in England, Germany, and France, and eventually returned to his native city. But the true motives for his conversion to Calvinism and his later reconversion to Catholicism have never come to light. Was he really an opportunist, as his quest for patronage would seem to indicate? Or was he, rather, a sensitive man who suffered much from life's vicissitudes in turbulent times? It has been assumed that Kosmica, who represents the opposite of the fair and virtuous Olympia in the epic, was really the wife of van der Noot, left behind him on his flight to England. If this is so, what is the real identity of Olympia?

If gaps remain in our knowledge of van der Noot's life, however, several of his works, at least, have become much more easily available. Twenty years ago there appeared an edition of *Theatre for Worldlings* (New York, 1937, 1939), the English version of *Het Theatre*, which contained a bibliographical note by Professor William A. Jackson and an introduction by the late Louis S. Friedland. More recently Professor W. A. P. Smit of the University of Utrecht published, with the aid of Dr. Vermeer, a text edition of van der Noot's *Het Bosken en Het Theatre* (Amsterdam and Antwerp, 1953). He also made available an edition of *Epitalameon*, with an account of the printing by Professor Hellinga (Zwolle, 1953). Now Dr. C. A. Zaalberg, who published *Das Buch Extasis* (Assen, 1954) as Vol. II of Neerlandica Traiectina, has presented *The Olympia Epics* as Vol. III of the same series. He also promises us an edition of the bilingual *Lofsang van Braband / Hymne de Brabant.*

Dr. Zaalberg has prepared his facsimile of *Das Buch Extasis* from the Amsterdam copy, and a page of the Wiesbaden copy has also been reproduced. The bilingual *Cort Begryp / Abregé* has been reprinted from a copy in the Amster-

dam University Library. These three poetic works indicate the main contents of van der Noot's projected Olympia epic. He intended to create an allegorical epic in the Renaissance style, but he apparently never finished this work. In the poetic summaries that Dr. Zaalberg has now made available, however, the poet tells how Mercury once revealed the divine beauty of Olympia to him in a dream. She becomes his ideal of beauty and virtue, and the poet embarks upon a Neoplatonic journey of the soul, in which he meets the virtues and vices of this world, as well as the gods and goddesses of the mythological world. In the end he is joined in marriage with Olympia in Heaven.

APR 18 1958
MANHATTAN
KANSAS

It is idle to speculate on what van der Noot's reputation would be today if he had completed the twelve cantos of his epic, and if we had two works he is known to have written but which are lost. These are his *Bücher seiner liebden* and *Ecclesiastices,* both of which are mentioned by Dr. Hermannus Grenerus in his *Apodixe,* a sixteenth-century *ars poetica* that Dr. Zaalberg has included in his facsimile edition.

On the debit side of van der Noot's literary reputation is the frequent appearance in his *Poeticsche Werken* of poems written merely in the hope of flattering some rich patron. They have no merit as literature. Yet we must remember that in his age such hack work was considered a venial sin.

Imitation was also respectable, and van der Noot imitated the Pléiade poets in both content and form. He imitated Ronsard, in particular, whose example may have inspired him to attempt an epic. Van der Noot's interest in other literatures is even more evident in *Het Theatre,* which contains translations of Petrarch and Du Bellay. It was for the English version of *Het Theatre,* of course, that Spenser did his translations, which have already attracted the attention of a number of scholars.

It is as an early Renaissance poet, however, that van der Noot is most important. He is a key figure in an age of transition, practicing the new forms of poetry—the epigram, the ode, and the sonnet. Hence the significance of the sonnets contained in *The Olympia Epics.* Jonker Jan van der Noot, as he liked to call himself, was convinced not only of his dignity as a patrician of Antwerp, but of the nobility of the poet's calling. He is thus a self-confident lyric poet, who is also sensitive to nature and capable of genuine emotion, a poet who delights in happiness, but also knows the pangs of love.

The publication of *The Olympia Epics* is bound to stimulate attempts to answer the many questions that still remain in van der Noot's life and work. Comparatists as well as students of Dutch literature will be grateful to Dr. Zaalberg for making another part of van der Noot's work available to them. The notes not only correct misprints in the original text, but indicate sources or parallel passages. Dr. Zaalberg has offered us another insight into the beginning of the Renaissance, into the beginning of modern sensibility.

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DIGENES AKRITES. Edited with an introduction, translation, and commentary by John Mavrogordato. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. cxxxiv, 273 p.

In this work, the editor examines critically the *Digenes Akrites,* "a romantic epic of between 3,000 and 4,000 lines, narrating and celebrating the parentage, education, exploits, and death of its eponymous hero—whose name implies the burden of the story, for it may be translated as *Twyborn the Borderer*" (p. xiv).

In an introduction which extends to 74 pages, Professor Mavrogordato gives a

critical summary of previous editors' work, especially that of Legrand and Grégoire, and offers his own ideas on the many varied problems which this poem presents. Whether or not the reader is convinced by all of Mavrogordato's arguments, he must consider them carefully. Moreover, he may be grateful that much of the previous work in the poems is summarized in the discussion.

Perhaps the most important points where Mavrogordato differs from previous critics are the identity of the hero and the date of composition of the poem. He denies Legrand's identification of Digenes with the Greek general Partherios and Grégoire's identification with Melias or Diogenes. He concludes instead that the hero is a fictitious character, many of whose attributes were inspired by the author's ideal emperor, Basil II. He further denies that true history is reflected in the poems: "Digenes is a symbolic hero; he must accordingly be placed in a symbolic setting. So the poem gives us no history but a composite arrangement of history, in which fragments or aspects of many actual facts are rearranged to give a universalized image of conflict on the eastern frontier; combined with elements of pure romance."

Grégoire proposed the period 930-44 as the date of composition, but Mavrogordato prefers the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-54). He is led to this conclusion because he believes a period of time must have elapsed between the reign of Basil II, with whom he identifies the Basil of IV, 56, and the composition of the poem to enable many incidents connected with this ruler to pass into legend. On the whole, the reign of Constantine IX seems to fit these and other requirements of the editor.

The Greek text printed is that of the Grottaferrata MS (fourteenth century) which was edited and published in 1892 by Emil Legrand. Legrand's text and apparatus are reprinted exactly, with only the misprints removed. Marvrogordato puts his own emendations and suggestions in his notes. A few narrative gaps in the Grottaferrata MS have been filled by passages from the Trebizond and Andros MSS (both of the sixteenth century).

There are seven MSS of this poem, five metrical, one Greek prose, and one Russian. Each MS offers a different version; they are not simply MSS of the same text. Each redactor seems to have rewritten the story according to his own whims—deleting, adding, changing at will. Mavrogordato has chosen the Grottaferrata version because it is the earliest and because it seems to have added few irrelevancies; in short, "there is no reason to suppose that the original Digeneid was very different from the Grottaferrata version" (p. lxxix). The text, then, is a conservative one, as is right for an edition which may be standard for many years to come.

Many corruptions seem to be left in the text with only an occasional remark in the notes: e.g., III, 324 (= 961 of the translation). The editor comments that vs. 324 appears to be an absentminded echo of 321. Perhaps deleting vs. 324 would solve the problem. Notice that vs. 325 follows quite as well after 323 as after 324, and that the ambiguous phrasing of 324 spoils an otherwise charming scene.

At IV, 525-531 (1604-1610 of the translation) Mavrogordato admits that 525-527 are rather "muddled" and seem to have been composed line for line. He further notes that 528-530 are an exact repetition of IV, 344-346. What he apparently does not see is that the passage appears to owe its existence to the similarity of incidents. It is surely more than mere coincidence that this whole passage can be deleted, the only result being an improvement in the story.

A third and final example is IV, 778-782 (1857-1861 of the translation):

> "'Grieve not, my darling soul,' the boy replied,
> 'Except your father's honourable boys,

No one was hurt partially or at all.'
Stooping he drew up her on to the horse,
Accommodating her on his own horse."

In his note, the editor states that he has intentionally reproduced in his translation the awkward repetition of "boys ... boys" and "horse ... horse." Naturally, in a poem of this type, there is bound to be a great deal of repetition; much of it may even be called naive, but I can find nothing like this elsewhere in the *Digenes Akrites*. The passage can be made more effective by the simple expedient of deleting vss. 779 (1858) and 782 (1861). Apart from the repetitions, vs. 779 is open to suspicion because the girl already knows that the servants have been slain, for she herself had witnessed the first encounter (IV, 651 ff.). Furthermore, she had asked Digenes only if her brothers were safe. Vs. 782 seems to owe its existence to an attempt to explain εἵλκυσεν by ὑποδέχεται and to make clear upon whose horse the girl is now placed. From vss. 586 and 623-624, however, it is perfectly clear that she has been on the same horse as the hero from the very beginning of the elopement.

There are many other passages where the editor seems to have been too conservative, but perhaps he has chosen the right course by keeping his thoughts confined to the notes.

Perhaps the most difficult task which an editor has to perform and the one which is most open to criticism is translation. Mavrogordato has succeeded in many places in his attempt to give an acceptable English rendering; in many he has missed the mark. His aims are expressed in the Preface (pp. v-vi): (1) "The most important thing about my translation is that it follows the Greek line for line ..." (2) "This translation has been kept as literal as possible." (3) "I have never tried to improve the Greek original. (Well hardly ever.) Clumsy Greek has often been turned into clumsy English." An editor should be judged only (or at least mainly) on his intentions. In his translation Mavrogordato has fulfilled each promise. Yet, in his attempt to follow his self-imposed limits, he has sometimes gone too far.

His attempt to be literal has caused him to translate word for word a normal Greek line. The result is awkward English:

I, 123 *νὰ λήψεσθε τὴν ἀδελφήν, μηδὲν ζημιωθέντες*
You shall receive your sister, nothing losing

I, 298 *γυνὴ δέ με ἐνίκησε πάνυ ὡραιοτάτη*
A woman though has conquered me most lovely.

II, 390 *ὦ τέκνον ποθεινότατον, πῶς μητρὸς ἐπελάθου;*
Dear child, your mother how have you forgotten?

III, 739 *τοὺς ὀδόντας ἐκσπάσατε πάντας τοὺς θηρίου*
Knock out the teeth all of them of the beast.

IV, 1596 *σὲ μὲν ἡ ἀγάπη φλέγει σε, ἡ ἀγάπη παροξύνει*
You too love burns you, and love pricks you on.

IV, 1961 *ταῦτα ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ παιδὸς ἤγαγεν ἡ ὡραία*
These the boy's mother led, the beautiful.

Sometimes his attempt at a literal translation causes Mavrogordato to omit illogically in English words which are logically left out in the Greek: e.g., I, 315 and III, 640. Occasionally his attempt to compress all of the Greek into a single line of English verse has resulted in awkward phrasing: e.g., VI, 3224 and 3277.

One peculiarity is difficult to understand: on a (not too careful) count, there are twenty-four occurrences of *καὶ γάρ* and seven of *γὰρ καί* in the text. Usually the editor omits in translation one word or the other, as is permissible. Three times, however, with *καὶ γάρ* and once with *γὰρ καί* Mavrogordato gives a translation which we have learned to expect from undergraduates: At vss. 192, 1528, 2646, 2679 he translates the phrases with "For and." Once (vs. 273) he offers something quite as puzzling, "For that." It is possible that he intended these to be examples of Elizabethan English (cf. p. vi), but, if so, the choice would appear rather unfortunate.

Lest everything appear faulty in his translation (this is far from the truth), it must be emphasized that in many places the editor has done a remarkable job. Vss. 3538 ff. is a good example:

> "Since all the sweets of this deceiving world
> Hell withers up and dreadful Charon takes,
> Like a dream passes, like a shadow flies,
> Like smoke dissolving all wealth of this life..."

See also the hero's dying speech at 3800 ff. This is a fine bit of Greek poetry to which the editor has done justice in his translation.

Mavrogordato apologizes in his Preface (p. iii) for the scantiness of his notes. We appreciate his hardships, but at the same time we could wish that his "cherished references" had not "become inaccessible." The period which gave birth to this poem (whether Grégoire or the present editor is correct in his dating) was a period of confusion. We need much more guidance than is sometimes offered us. We must still at times consult the works of Legrand and Grégoire for facts, suggestions, hints to an understanding of the poem, which, for all its difficulties and (from a classical point of view) lateness, is certainly of value for its own sake as well as for the light which it sheds on its own times.

Despite its flaws, this edition must be accounted a very welcome addition to Byzantine studies. It will be a long time before another work comes along to supersede it; and when that new work does come, it will of necessity be under heavy obligation to Professor Mavrogordato.

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HUGO ET LA POÉSIE PURE. By Alfred Glauser. Geneva: Librairie E. Droz; Paris: Librairie Minard, 1957. xiii, 132 p.

Quelques mots de Valéry sur V. Hugo placés en tête de la très brève Introduction de M. Glauser renseignent dès l'abord le lecteur sur la perspective de cette étude: "On peut bien désigner dans son œuvre quantité de faiblesses et de taches, et même d'énormes. Ce ne sont, grâce au magnifique reste, que les taches d'un soleil" (*Vues*). De cette épigraphe, deux déclarations capitales de l'auteur sont comme la mise en œuvre. L'une proteste que "Hugo, malgré ses erreurs... nous apparaît comme le poète le plus pur de notre langue, car il y a en lui une volonté avant tout de Poésie" (p. xi). L'autre—corollaire de la première—allègue que "refuser Hugo à cause de ses défauts, c'est renoncer à la Poésie" (p. xii). Et déjà l'on prévoit que le dernier mot du livre sera une pleine acceptation de V. Hugo poète. Encore faudrait-il s'entendre. Car, par ces déclarations mêmes, l'auteur pose dès le début une double question—en réalité, ce n'en est qu'une seule—à laquelle il répondra progressivement au cours de son étude: qu'est-ce que la poésie? qu'est-ce qu'un poète?

Simplifions, pour les besoins de la cause. On distingue deux sortes de poètes ou, si l'on préfère, de poésies. Il y a le poète qui dit quelque chose et il y a le poète qui se contente de dire. Il y a le poète qui trouve son inspiration dans l'univers physique et moral. Et il y a le poète qui "se passe de sujet," qui "se prend lui-même comme sujet," à savoir "son désir de puissance verbale" (p. xi). L'œuvre poétique est "un lieu de combat entre le pur et l'impur, entre le chant et le sujet" (p. xii). Que le chant domine, que le mot l'emporte sur la pensée, que l'œuvre de création soit avant tout verbale—et l'on se trouve en présence du poète pur, de la poésie pure.

Comme on le voit, nous sommes loin ici de l'abbé Bremond dont le nom se trouve infailliblement évoqué par le titre *Hugo et la poésie pure*. (Ce titre peut paraître malheureux, mais il faut reconnaître qu'il eût été difficile, pour ne pas dire impossible, d'en trouver un meilleur.) Aux dernières pages du livre, M. Glauser cherchera à mettre les choses au point: parler de poète pur à propos de V. Hugo ne peut se faire, dit-il, qu'en "élargissant à sa [à V. Hugo] mesure la formule de l'abbé Bremond" (p. 131). Mais si le célèbre *ineffable* poétique dépend davantage des sons du vers que du sens des mots qui le composent, seule la conjonction de ces deux éléments donne naissance à la grande poésie. Pour V. Hugo, ce qui comptait avant tout, c'est le son des mots. Il était un "maniaque du Verbe" (p. 8). Ailleurs, M. Glauser déclare: "Au moment où V. Hugo prenait la plume, il ne savait pas où il allait s'arrêter" (p. 79). Ce qui guidait le poète, c'était sa fantaisie créatrice. La création à partir du Verbe, voilà ce dont il a donné au monde le plus bel échantillon.

Cette création, M. Glauser en examine les éléments constitutifs dans une série de chapitres consacrés à des poèmes variés. Avec raison, il commence par l'examen de la dernière œuvre—restée inachevée—*Dieu*. Car Dieu, c'est aussi, bien entendu, V. Hugo lui-même, tout comme au chapitre suivant Hugo sera "Hugo-Satyre." Ici, le berger de *Magnitudo parvi* nous offre "un des premiers lieux de rencontre des intentions de poésie pure" (p. 38). "Genèse" nous mène de *La Fin de Satan*, en passant par *Ce que dit la bouche d'ombre*, à l'anti-poème *L'Ane*, parodie de l'homme qui écrit. "Chansons" traite des poèmes légers de sens mais riches en jeu sonore, corde raide—parfois vague fil—sur laquelle le poète-voltigeur fait des tours surprenants (p. 63), et montre aussi l'attrait qu'exerce sur le poète-chanteur la musique des mots. Ce chapitre est complété par le suivant, "La Pente de la Musique," où nous voyons le poète pur jouer avec les énumérations et se plaire en particulier à l'accumulation de noms propres; la magie de ces sons étranges et bizarres engendre l'image, souvent même la pensée: "les noms sont un encens qui trouble la raison" (p. 97). L'on en arrive ainsi tout naturellement à cette "Création par la forme" qui semble le propre du poète pur pour qui le mot est un "être vivant" (p. 101), chez qui le sens glisse sur la pente des sons (p. 105), et dont la phrase est telle qu' "une fois ... lancée, comment l'arrêter?" (*ibid.*) Un dernier chapitre soulève "l'éternelle et vaine question" de la sincérité du poète—du poète pur dont l'état d'âme "durait ce que durait l'espace d'un vers, d'un poème" (p. 122)—et nous le montre, dans un geste de pure poésie, chantant sa mort douze ans avant de mourir et se préparant ainsi une éternelle jeunesse.

Tout au long de son étude, l'examen de M. Glauser porte sur les rapports intimes entre le son et le sens des mots, la musique et le sujet des poèmes qu'il passe en revue. En réalité, la poésie pure n'a comme *sujet* que "la volonté d'être, la volonté de couvrir la page vierge" (p. 18). Pour que vive le poème, il faut que meure la vie réelle (p. 121). Au vin bouillonnant de la poésie de remplacer l'eau des choses! (p. 19). La poésie pure? Tunique chatoyante, vêtement sonore. Porteuse de musique plutôt que porteuse d'idées (p. 73), c'est tout juste si elle a besoin des mots pour créer son rythme (p. 82). En effet, son chant se crée surtout à partir de l'alli-

tération et de l'assonance. Chez Hugo, l'allitération devient une obsession, l'assonance une manie, la rime un piège constant. Balbutiement sacré ou simple acrobatie, l'allitération et l'assonance suscitent l'image plutôt qu'elles ne la soutiennent. Inspiré par son modèle et désireux de faire comprendre le phénomène en question, M. Glauser en arrive à parler de "nid gazouillant de rimes, d'assonances et d'allitérations" (p. 66), de sons qui "se poursuivent comme de sombres amoureux" (p. 33), d'éléments de pensée qui "se lient dans un sauvage baiser d'assonances et d'allitérations" (p. 55) . . . Enfin, dans les chansons, l'antithèse règne suprême et crée un "mouvement d'escarpolette poétique" (p. 69). Au reste, comme chez V. Hugo tout prend des proportions gigantesques, ces escarpolettes, si l'on s'y balance, ne tardent pas à devenir "des carrousels auxquels il faudra pour leur ébat le ciel tout entier" (p. 71). Et qu'on n'aille pas dire que le poète divague: il chante, et c'est tout. (Ailleurs, M. Glauser dira: "Il écrit, voilà tout!," p. 23.)

On constate, chez V. Hugo, que la somptuosité de l'expression est en raison inverse de la force du sentiment. Qu'il éprouve le moindre attendrissement, il suffit qu'il se mette à écrire pour qu'éclate en gerbe sonore la fusée des allitérations entraînant l'idée: "Il y a toujours chez Hugo un moment où les mots ont plus de mouvement que de sens, où ils regrettent d'avoir quelque chose à dire" (p. 82). Parce que pure, cette poésie "oubliera ce qu'elle dit pour d'autant plus aimer ce qu'elle dit" (p. 79).

Admirons l'aisance avec laquelle M. Glauser se meut dans l'univers hugolien. Son exposé frise le tour de force. La présentation des faits—citations de vers, exemples d'assonances, d'allitérations, de jeu de consonnes, de jonglerie avec les noms propres et les sonorités imprévues—y alterne agréablement avec des appréciations nuancées et d'habiles caractérisations. C'est avec la même aisance que l'auteur se meut à travers l'univers littéraire; parler de V. Hugo l'amène tout naturellement à parler de bien d'autres auteurs, d'Agrippa d'Aubigné à Corbière, à Mallarmé, à Valéry, à Claudel, de Rabelais et Montaigne à Bergson et à l'abbé Bremond. Ces nombreux rapprochements rehaussent nettement l'intérêt de ce mince volume dont ils augmentent la densité.

Quelques réserves s'imposent. Tout d'abord, on serait en droit de se demander si l'auteur n'insiste pas à l'excès sur le rôle des assonances et des allitérations dans la poésie de V. Hugo. Que ce rôle soit considérable, c'est entendu. Mais à lire M. Glauser, on a l'impression que chez Hugo les sons gouvernent tout, mot, rime, image, pensée; l'inspiration serait tout entière de nature orale et auditive. Soit. Le plaisir qu'avait Hugo à jouer avec les sons de la langue est indéniable. Mais alors on s'étonne de ne pas voir M. Glauser indiquer tout au moins la direction dans laquelle cette poésie verbale pointait, la voie où elle devait finir par s'engager avec Dada, le surréalisme, la rime-Aragon! De même, réduire la poésie à une musique, un chant, un jeu d'allitérations, d'assonances et de rimes, n'est-ce pas la réduire au procédé d'incantation? M. Glauser n'hésite pas à prononcer le mot. Certes, V. Hugo est un magicien hors ligne, et la vigueur de son démon verbal suscite à juste titre l'étonnement, voire l'admiration. Mais comment ne pas se demander si la transe constitue véritablement le point culminant—but et fin—de la poésie? Pour être juste, notons que M. Glauser lui-même sent bien qu'en s'attachant à cet unique aspect du génie poétique de V. Hugo, aspect qui est tout fantaisie verbale—et qu'il désigne par le terme de poésie pure—il n'aborde ce grand poète que par un côté seulement. Sa défense, c'est que devant un poète complet, la critique est forcément incomplète; toute étude en est réduite à n'être qu'une approximation qui, nécessairement, fausse la perspective d'ensemble.

Telles sont quelques-unes des nombreuses réflexions que M. Glauser provoque par le fait même qu'il prend nettement position en faveur d'une poésie pure qui serait une poésie-musique. Même si, chez V. Hugo, cette poésie va de la gamme à

la symphonie, de la chanson discrète au jeu des grandes orgues, des vers-gazouillis aux vers-clairons, tout le monde ne sera pas disposé à suivre l'auteur sur ce terrain, ni à déclarer avec lui que la poésie de V. Hugo a la pureté des Titans où les défauts "sont fondus dans un ensemble qui de loin sera toujours admirable" (p. 131). Sans vouloir être méchant, on serait tenté de rappeler qu'il y a des gens qui, pour cette raison même, préféreront toujours admirer V. Hugo de très loin. Pour M. Glauser, il existe même un "miracle hugolien": "Ce poète amateur de rêve [entendez: d'une réalité créée par le Verbe] était Français. La raison ne l'abandonnait pas... dans la forme la plus ivre du monde est contenue la pensée solide d'une tête étonnamment intelligente" (p. 131). Au reste, qu'on soit d'accord avec l'auteur ou pas, on ne peut qu'admirer l'agilité de sa pensée et de sa plume. Nous retrouvons ici cette "critique alerte et heureuse" qu'il s'est plu à souligner chez son maître Albert Thibaudet à propos de ce même V. Hugo, une critique qu'inspire "un mouvement de sympathie" et qui s'efforce d' "épouser la genèse même de l'œuvre."[1]

Entre l'art pour l'art, et l'art pour le Progrès, V. Hugo a balancé, produisant une œuvre poétique aux multiples facettes où l'on trouve de tout, du pire au meilleur. A nous de choisir! Quant à M. Glauser, il opte pour le poète pur qui "part pour un monde de vision où il crée tout: les vers seront alors beaux par leur corps, par leur sonorité; la ténuité apparente de leur sens contiendra tous les mystères. Nous ne verrons plus la main qui écrit; nous n'entendrons plus que la voix qui chante" (p. 132).

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GOETHE ET VALÉRY. By François Garrigue. Paris: Les Cahiers des Lettres Modernes, 1955. 140 p.

Sous le titre de *Goethe et Valéry*, ce livre est, en somme, une étude sur Paul Valéry, plus précisément sur le Valéry de *Mon Faust*. M. Garrigue a choisi comme point de départ le *Discours en l'honneur de Goethe* prononcé par Valéry en 1932. Les idées principales contenues dans ce *Discours* et dans la *Conférence* de l'année suivante lui servent comme autant de pivots. Ou, si l'on préfère une autre image, on pourrait dire que ces idées sont les points de base d'où l'auteur prend son élan pour s'engager dans l'examen de quelque problème, puis auxquels il revient pour repartir à plusieurs reprises dans une nouvelle direction. Pour le lecteur, cette façon de procéder a comme résultat—entre autres—qu'il ne se voit pas invité à suivre simplement, pas à pas, la progression d'un exposé systématique. Il se trouve plutôt placé devant un véritable feu d'artifice de réflexions et démonstrations qui, dans leur rayonnement, s'écartent souvent assez loin de leur point d'origine et ne se rattachent les unes aux autres que par une racine commune.

L'impression qui se dégage de l'ensemble est celle d'un jaillissement continuel, d'une abondance qui frise l'exubérance, enfin d'un entrain et d'un plaisir à la gymnastique intellectuelle qui ne sauraient que remplir de satisfaction ceux dont l'esprit se plaît à l'examen des objets sous toutes leurs facettes. Reconnaissons l'envers de la médaille: d'une part, répétitions dues à des recoupements inévitables, et d'autre part, difficulté pour le lecteur à dégager les grandes lignes et les idées essentielles du fouillis des remarques et réflexions: il est facile de se perdre dans un parc où avenues et sentiers ne se distinguent qu'à grand'peine. Toutefois, ces difficultés d'accès sont amplement compensées. Voilà un livre auquel on se plaira à retourner pour relire tel ou tel passage, tel ou tel argument.

[1] Alfred Glauser, *Albert Thibaudet et la critique créatrice* (Paris, 1951), pp. 95, 96.

Parmi le grand nombre de problèmes abordés, quelques-uns méritent d'être relevés ici. Et d'abord, pourquoi, dit M. Garrigue, pourquoi cet intérêt considérable de Valéry—déjà dans la soixantaine—pour Goethe? Valéry connaissait sûrement Goethe bien avant la composition du *Discours*; mais à partir de ce moment, sa pensée va s'occuper de lui à tel point qu'en 1939 il se mettra à composer, lui aussi, un *Faust*... C'est que Valéry demande à Goethe de l'expliquer à lui-même. Goethe lui sert de miroir. Il se penche sur lui—surface qui lui renvoie son image—comme, jadis, Narcisse se penchait sur l'eau. Aussi trouve-t-on, à la première page même de l'étude de M. Garrigue, quelques vers du *Narcisse*:

> "Ce soir...
> Ma soif me vient abattre au bord même des eaux.
> Mais pour désaltérer cette amour curieuse
> Je ne troublerai pas l'onde mystérieuse."

Seulement, si Valéry interroge Goethe sur son propre mystère et sur le mystère du monde qui l'entoure, il ne trouve pas la réponse cherchée, ou plutôt il refuse la réponse offerte. Aussi l'étude de M. Garrigue se termine-t-elle sur les vers déjà cités au début, mais repris sous une forme légèrement modifiée:

> "Mais pour désaltérer son amour curieuse,
> Il ne troublera pas l'onde mystérieuse."

Et l'auteur de conclure: "A la dernière page de son *Faust*, comme aux premières lignes du *Discours en l'honneur de Goethe*, nous retrouvons le même Valéry—*Mourant de soif au bord de la fontaine*" (p. 132).

Ainsi résumés, cette quête et son aboutissement font figure d'échec. La vérité, c'est que la nature même de Valéry s'opposait à toute autre solution. Alors que pour Goethe, l'individu est une monade dont le devoir est de prendre conscience de sa place dans l'univers, pour Valéry il s'agit de se trouver soi-même d'abord pour examiner ensuite ce que les autres représentent. M. Garrigue résume cette opposition de nature des deux génies dans une de ces formules heureuses qui font l'agrément de son étude: "L'un se cherche perpétuellement dans le monde, l'autre cherche le monde en lui" (p. 46). Ailleurs, il montre que si l'activité de Goethe (entendez: de Faust) est tournée vers le monde extérieur, celle de Valéry, en revanche, l'est vers le monde intérieur. Contraste qui se retrouve dans les deux *Faust*: chez Goethe, Faust vise à la conquête du monde; le drame est extérieur; par la forme, l'œuvre se place dans la lignée shakespearienne; mais chez Valéry, Faust vise à la maîtrise de soi; c'est un drame tout intérieur, et la pièce ressort du théâtre psychologique.

La confrontation Goethe-Valéry, reprise sous plusieurs aspects et dans une variété considérable de plans et de perspectives, est loin d'être seule de son espèce: En fait, s'il sert de miroir à Valéry, Goethe—grâce aux citations fort habilement choisies par M. Garrigue—se sert de miroir à lui-même. Valéry, de son côté, jauge Goethe, mais se jauge également lui-même. A quoi il faut ajouter encore les jugements portés soit sur Goethe soit sur Valéry par des critiques variés (MM. Baldensperger, Bémol, Berl, Kemp et autres), et enfin ceux de M. Garrigue qui, à son tour, se prononce tant sur les deux héros de son livre que sur leurs critiques. Véritable jeu de miroirs où reflets de reflets se multiplient à l'envi.

De la confrontation des œuvres mêmes, du *Faust* de Goethe et de celui de Valéry, il ressort qu'on ne saurait parler d'imitation au sens étroit du terme: les ressemblances sont plus apparentes que réelles. Le *Faust* de Goethe va du ciel à l'enfer en passant par la terre; de même, le *Faust* de Valéry va de la pensée pure au royaume de l'inconscient en passant par ce domaine intermédiaire (du mal) où se fait le

déchirement de la personnalité. Les deux grands problèmes qui se posent, soit pour Goethe soit pour Valéry—et, par suite, pour leurs Fausts respectifs—sont ceux de l'individualisme et de la volonté. La liberté de l'esprit, voilà ce que défendent—et à quel prix?—favorisent et cultivent nos deux génies, mais pour des raisons et par des moyens fort différents. Quand on en arrive au rôle de l'individu dans la société, les différences s'accusent encore. Comme le Faust de Goethe, celui de Valéry doit se mesurer au monde du cœur (démons de la concupiscence) et au monde de l'action (démons de l'orgueil) ; mais là où le premier défend la liberté de l'individu contre les dangers du dehors, le second la défend contre les dangers du dedans. La volonté se montre active chez Faust-Goethe : il dit *oui* à la vie ; chez Valéry, elle reste suspendue : son Faust ne peut que dire *non* à la tentation qui consisterait à abandonner la pensée pure pour les modes de penser de la vie ordinaire.

Pour rendre ne fût-ce qu'une justice élémentaire à la richesse de l'essai de M. Garrigue, il faudrait parler encore des remarques perspicaces qu'il fait sur le style et la structure dans l'œuvre des deux poètes ; sur leur conception opposée de la beauté en général, du Beau poétique en particulier (l'esthétique goethéenne repose sur un acquiescement là où l'esthétique valérienne est fondée sur une résistance) ; sur la nature des personnages et le rôle qui leur est assigné. On voudrait aussi pouvoir s'étendre sur l'emploi ingénieux que M. Garrigue fait de certains mythes (Icare, Prométhée) pour exposer ses idées, et sur la façon dont la tentation de saint Antoine ou Hamlet lui servent de catalyseurs. Au reste, comme l'auteur le fait remarquer avec raison, les personnages de Faust et de Méphisto sont, tant l'un que l'autre, à mi-chemin du mythe et du symbole. M. Garrigue a soin de mettre le lecteur en garde contre le piège facile qui consiste à confondre la créature avec son créateur. Il déclare péremptoirement : "Faust n'est pas davantage Valéry qu'il n'est Goethe" (p. 65).

Cependant, à plusieurs reprises, il ne peut lui-même résister à la tentation de se servir de Faust pour définir les attitudes et l'état d'esprit soit de Goethe soit de Valéry. M. Garrigue signale fort justement que Faust, c'est le problème de l'individu dans la société. On ne peut que regretter qu'il ne se soit pas attardé davantage sur ce point. Il dit bien que, si Valéry interroge Goethe, c'est au nom de ses contemporains aussi bien qu'au sien propre, et dans une page fort intéressante il énumère "les grandes tentations de notre âge" (p. 61). Il revient encore à la question sur la fin de son étude, mais, tout compte fait, c'est à peine s'il en a effleuré la surface. On peut regretter également qu'il n'ait pas souligné davantage la différence de niveau qui sépare notre époque de celle de Goethe. De l'optimisme du croyant (pp. 21 et 131) et homme d'action qu'était Goethe, au refrain sceptique, désabusé, presque désespéré du "j'en sais trop" (p. 126) de Valéry, il y a plus que l'opposition de deux tempéraments : les temps mêmes ont changé. La tragédie du devenir universel de l'humanité est désormais réduite à celle de l'individu. Aujourd'hui, la question qui se pose, c'est de savoir si Faust a encore une place dans le monde. Car l'âme même de Faust, c'est "ce désir inépuisable d'être soi" (p. 125). Or, s'il faut en croire Valéry, de nos jours "l'individu se meurt" (*Mon Faust*, p. 57).

M. Garrigue a intitulé les dernières pages de son livre "Une Crise de la personnalité." Ce faisant, il boucle en quelque sorte la boucle, revenant à ce qui constitue, en dépit de tous les développements et digressions, le thème principal de son livre, comme cela était le thème principal du *Discours* et le sujet même du *Faust* de Valéry. Ce thème—qu'on se rappelle que la grande question est toujours : par quoi Faust peut-il être tenté?—ce thème, on ne saurait mieux faire, pour le définir, que de reprendre les mots mêmes de l'auteur : "Comment un homme peut-il, sans renier la sensibilité, ne jamais se résoudre à dépendre d'elle, ne jamais permettre que *quelque chose vaille tout ce qu'il est*? En choisissant lui-même ses tentations" (p. 107). Et M. Garrigue d'ajouter : "Inutile de dire que cette réponse pose plus

de problèmes qu'elle n'en résout." On pourrait en dire autant de l'étude même de M. Garrigue, si riche en aperçus de tous genres. C'est le meilleur hommage qu'on puisse lui rendre.

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OPERA AS DRAMA. By Joseph Kerman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956. 269, iv p.

The idea behind this book is that opera is not strictly a musical form but rather a dramatic form "in which music has an articulating function"; that, although the great composers of opera differed widely, they all viewed opera not as a mere "concert in costume, or a play with highlights and an overall mood supplied by music, but an art-form with its own consistency and intensity, and its own sphere of expression." In the light of this thesis, Professor Kerman traces the history of opera, analyzing at least one masterpiece from each period of music which best embodies his ideal.

For the early period of opera, Monteverdi is, of course, the master chosen and *Orfeo* the opera discussed in considerable detail. The recitative is seen as Monteverdi's greatest achievement, the exemplification of the neoclassic ideal that "music should imitate the accents of passionate speech as best represented by the grand, exaggerated rhetoric of a great actor." With Gluck, on the other hand, the aria is shown as the articulating device, used nowhere more successfully than in his *Orfeo ed Euridice*. In the period between these composers (called here "the dark age of opera," since baroque opera is so little known) Lully and Purcell are singled out for discussion. In the operas of Lully, emphasis is seen as shifting to what the French call *le merveilleux*—chorus, ballet, spectacle. And Purcell's miniature *Dido* also follows this pattern essentially.

As one might expect, Mozart is the subject of a large portion of the book; several of his greatest works are analyzed. Here Professor Kerman centers his investigation around the ensemble as the chief means by which Mozart made meaningful the action of the drama. Indeed, he says, in *The Marriage of Figaro* Mozart through brilliance of ensemble treatment created a drama never even suspected by Beaumarchais or by the librettist Da Ponte.

"Continuity" in opera is presented as the chief preoccupation with nineteenth-century composers, and thematic repetition the most important dramatic technique. In a lengthy analysis, Verdi's *Otello* is shown to be startlingly transformed from Shakespeare's original through musical means. A different type of opera altogether, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* is described as unique in that the opera *is* the play—Debussy's dramatic method (musical impression) is one with Maeterlinck's. And Wagner's ideal is presented (in a long discussion based upon *Tristan*) as a "grandiose organic unity according to the principles of the symphonic style."

Following Wagnerian extremes in "continuous opera," Professor Kerman points out a general retrenchment in all types of opera in the twentieth century. As masterpieces from two contemporary musical strongholds, *Wozzeck* (from the twelve-tone school) and *The Rake's Progress* (from the neoclassic school) are analyzed. And in a closing chapter Professor Kerman briefly discusses a number of popular operas (especially those of Puccini and Strauss) which do not embody the idea—opera as drama, *dramma per musica*—and points out their banalites and second-rate devices. Menotti in our own day, he feels, is a trivial composer who has successfully exploited the banal style of another epoch. As to a formula for

good opera in the future, Professor Kerman rightfully feels that the composer, not the critic, must speak. He does plead, however, for high standards and begs the composer to remember that *dramma per musica* "should aim no lower than drama in verse or prose."

Professor Kerman's exposition and defense of the integrity of opera as an art form in which dramatic problems are solved by musical means is fresh and cogent, well reasoned throughout, and bolstered by well-chosen examples. And even in his musical analyses—where a less-skilled writer might have become over-involved in technical jargon—his style is eminently readable, and the various arguments he presents should be as clear to the general reader as to the musicologist. Since music is international and operatic examples are chosen from the literatures of many countries, there is much here, too, for the comparatist—for example, basic differences between Shakespeare's *Othello* and Verdi's drama, organic differences revealed by the music, as poetry reveals the quality of action for Shakespeare. In a way, one might say that this approach is the "new criticism" applied to music; "clost reading" of the music has obviously formulated the underlying ideas of the book.

NAN COOKE CARPENTER

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WALT WHITMAN ABROAD. Critical Essays from Germany, France, Scandinavia, Russia, Italy, Spain and Latin America, Israel, Japan, and India. Edited by Gay Wilson Allen. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1955. xii, 290 p.

The first centennial of *Leaves of Grass* has been appropriately observed with the publication of *Walt Whitman Abroad*. This volume of "foreign criticism in translation" is commemorative in more ways than one; it reminds us that *Leaves of Grass* "was acknowledged abroad as a literary masterpiece before its value was generally recognized in America" (p. vii), and it also proves that Walt Whitman rings true only in American, a language not yet acknowledged abroad.

Walt Whitman Abroad is, however, not only a collection of essays in translalation. Of as much value as the translations themselves are the editor's introductory essays that head each section. Taken together they give us an excellent picture of the repercussions of *Leaves of Grass* abroad. Besides these introductory essays, the book offers a valuable tool to the scholar in its selected bibliographies (pp. 266-281). Curiously, some of the essays in the book are omitted from the bibliography: Hermann Pongs's "Walt Whitman and Stefan George" (pp. 17-55); Valery Larbaud's "Development of the Poet" (pp. 61-75); José Martí's "The Poet Walt Whitman" (pp. 201-213). The translations are on the whole quite elegant and clear—though a passage like this defies understanding: "Soaring into the soaring sorrow of the cosmos. The soaring of love, which is infinite even in sorrow" (p. 23).

Walt Whitman Abroad is, besides an anthology of critical writings on Whitman, a reference handbook for the study of the admiration, the opposition, the misunderstandings occasioned by his works through a century. The special validity and interest of the book lie in the fact that many critics abroad see in Whitman a symbol or even the embodiment of America. Their comments on his works are constantly aimed at the United States. We know, of course, how dubious this identification is. We are well aware today of how little Whitmanism is left in these states, and we begin to doubt whether there ever was any; in fact, we are not quite sure we know what Whitmanism is. And yet, for better or for worse, the picture

of America in foreign lands has been colored by the reading of the choppy lines of *Leaves of Grass*.

But there is another lesson in the book. After we analyze each country's peculiar distortions of *Leaves of Grass*, we must reflect on what there was in the ambiguous Whitman that could lend a color of truth to a thousand twists. For a German his voice is "virile" and "chaste" (p. 10); a Russian sees in him a "brother spirit to Dante and Goethe" as well as to Brigham Young and Mrs. Eddy (p. 170); he is studied as a mystic (p. 14), yet it seems tenable that "he could not conceal his pathological nature" (p. 126) or that "he was not at all a strong man; he was really not much of a man" (p. 135); he blurts out "newspaper headlines" (p. 125); he is very much like a revivalist (p. 128); his catalogues are comparable to Genesis (p. 220).

Poet and prophet, a "barbaric yawp," Walt from Long Island remains a clue —but alas, unread—to a region of the mind, a region we are perhaps afraid to explore. *Walt Whitman Abroad* and the studies it announces may bring a revolution in our understanding of Whitman. After looking in this mirror, and well aware of the deceptive beckoning of so many images, we may be able to turn around, locate the original Walt Whitman, and solve a riddle.

BERNARD GICOVATE

Tulane University

VARIA

ERICH AUERBACH
(1892-1957)

Erich Auerbach, Sterling professor of Romance philology at Yale University, died on October 13, 1957 in Gaylord Sanatorium, Wallingford, Connecticut. He had gone there a few weeks before to recuperate from the consequences of what seemed a slight stroke he had suffered during the summer on a trip in Germany.

Mr. Auerbach was born in Berlin, November 9, 1892. He studied law at Heidelberg before World War I. After he returned from military service with the German army, his interests changed. He became a student of Romance philology at the University of Greifswald, where he received his doctor's degree with a dissertation, *Zur Technik der Frührenaissancenovelle in Italien und Frankreich* (Heidelberg, 1921). He then joined the staff of the Prussian State Library in Berlin. In 1925 he published his translation of Vico's *Scienza nuova* (*Die neue Wissenschaft*, Munich) and in 1929 his first ambitious book, *Dante als Dichter der irdischen Welt* (Berlin-Leipzig).The Dante book, which in its first chapter anticipates many ideas elaborated in *Mimesis*, brought him an appointment to the chair of Romance philology at Marburg in 1929.

When he was dismissed by the Hitler regime in 1936, he joined the band of German scholars who had found a haven in Istanbul. There, as a professor in the Turkish State University, Mr. Auerbach spent the war years and there he wrote his greatest work: *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Bern, 1946). This book was preceded by a collection of *Neue Dantestudien* (Istanbul, 1944), including the important paper on "Figura" which had first been published in *Archivum romanicum* in 1939.

Mr. Auerbach came to the United States in 1947, first to Pennsylvania State College and then, after a pleasant interlude at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, to Yale University. He was named professor in 1950 and Sterling professor in 1956. During the years at Yale he collected some of his scattered papers for publication as *Vier Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der französischen Bildung* (Bern, 1951; "La cour et la ville," "Über Pascals politische Theorie," "Paul-Louis Courier," "Baudelaires *Fleurs du Mal* und das Erhabene"), and saw *Mimesis* translated into English, Italian, Spanish, and Hebrew. In his last years he worked on a project devoted to the Early Middle Ages; a manuscript, completed before his death, will appear soon, in Bern, as *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im frühen Mittelalter.*

No assessment of Mr. Auerbach's great contribution to literary history and to mediaeval studies can be attempted here. But in *Comparative Literature* something should be said of his truly comparative book, *Mimesis*, and of his general outlook. The book is misjudged if it is described and criticized as a general history of realism. It is concerned not with realism as a simple reflection of everyday reality but with man's attitude toward the world in general, man's conscious and unconscious epistemology. It is a tragic interpretation with a peculiar concreteness and historical peculiarity. It combines historicism and existentialism, two possibly contradictory historical forces (see my article, "Auerbach's Special Realism," *Kenyon Review*, XVI, 1954, 299-307).

Mr. Auerbach's method of investigation starts always with a text and emphasizes philology, the art of reading, and stylistic analysis. From there he branches out into reflections on history and sociology (such as the provenience of writers or their public) and finally arrives at what he calls "inner" history, i.e., Geistesge-

schichte. In the preface to *Vier Untersuchungen*, in a defense of *Mimesis* ("Epilegomena zu Mimesis," *Romanische Forschungen*, LXV, 1954, 1-18), and in a review article (on my *History of Modern Criticism, ibid.*, LXVII, 1956, 387-397), Mr. Auerbach formulated his insistence on philology, on the text, on the particular and concrete, and his peculiar combination of stylistics, sociology, and intellectual history more fully than in the few methodological remarks in *Mimesis*.

He emphasizes his debt to German romanticism and Hegel but also the fact that he does not share their speculative ambitions. He goes so far as to wish that it had been possible for him not to use "general expressions" at all, that he might have suggested his ideas purely through the presentation of a series of particulars. This belief in the concrete truth of the particular is combined, in Mr. Auerbach, with a historicism which rejects all absolutisms in favor of what he calls "historical perspectivism." This historical relativism, he insists, is not an eclecticism or capricious impressionism or anything like a surrender of judgment. It is rather a combination of three types of judgment.

"One ceases even to look for absolute standards outside of history. One learns slowly to find inner-historical, elastic, always provisional categories of order in the phenomena themselves. One begins to learn what the phenomena meant in their own age and what they mean in the three thousand years of literary life of which we have some conception, and then thirdly, what they mean to me, here and now. This is enough for judgment."

Mr. Auerbach is very conscious of this last personal element, the final appeal to something which cannot be learned, to the eye for the significant, to an artistic imaginative sympathy. He knows that *Mimesis* is a book written "by a certain man, in a certain situation, at the beginning of the nineteen forties." But this self-critical, self-conscious awareness of one's own position and of the position of the object in its time and in the whole tradition of literature seems a very precarious point of view. It requires a great inner freedom.

"Relativism," Mr. Auerbach asserts, "is the presupposition of comprehensive and serious historical labor; but it is not identical with lack of character, as is shown by the example of Montaigne. One needs rather self-criticism and fearlessness than a fixed world view. One can obey truth, even if one never forgets how ambiguous are its commands and orders; I believe even that this is the only proper kind of obedience."

But to this friend and colleague who admires his learning, sensitivity, and judgment there came always—in our dialogues—a moment when it seemed impossible to acquiesce in this skeptical relativism. The very concept of truth and knowledge contradicts and refutes the complex scheme of relativities required by his antitheoretical central theory. I believe that Mr. Auerbach is often too humble or harsh toward himself and his methods—that he *has* achieved insights which are "true" unhistorically and that, in *Mimesis* he has written a book which is not only a great work of scholarship and a symptomatic pronouncement of our age, but a work of truth, insight, and art which cannot be superseded or made obsolete by mere historical change.

R. W.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The International Comparative Literature Association will hold its Second Congress in Chapel Hill, N.C. September 8-12, 1958. Full information and a preliminary program of the Congress may be obtained by writing Professor Werner P. Friederich, P.O. Box 775, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Comparative Studies in Society and History is a new journal edited by Sylvia L. Thrupp at the University of Chicago. It will serve as a clearing house for problems common to any two or more disciplines concerned with man's life in society—history, religion, literature, art, the theoretical social sciences.

Abstracts of English Studies has just issued its second number. It plans to publish regularly abstracts of all articles relating to English and American literature and linguistics which appear in a large selection of learned journals. It is edited by Lewis Sawin at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.

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